

# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF MATHEMATICS

VOL. 7

JANUARY 1880

NO. 1

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*A Periodical Journal  
for the American Sciences*

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21

Founded 1880, Boston  
Publisher and Proprietor, J. B. Williams



# THE AMERICAN I M A G O

VOL. 7

JULY 1950

NO. 2

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*A Psychoanalytic Journal  
for the Arts and Sciences*

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Founded by: Dr. Hanns Sachs, Boston  
Publisher and Managing Editor: George B. Wilbur, M. D.

Social Science

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no.2



# THE TOWER OF BABEL IN PSYCHOLOGY AND IN PSYCHIATRY

*(Towards a Theory of Determinants in Psychology)*

BY

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Topeka, Kansas

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"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Come let us make brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Come let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name — lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

And Jehovah said, Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language — and this is what they begin to do: and now nothing will be withheld from them, which they purpose to do. Come, let us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

So Jehovah scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off building the city. Therefore was the name of it called Babel; because Jehovah did there confound the language of all the earth; and from

\* An abstract of parts of this paper was published in the *Psychoanalytic Review* . . . Vol. 36, No. 2, April, 1949 under the title: "Ideological Warfare in the Psychological Sciences." The author discussed many aspects of this part with Leopold Bellak, M.D., whose many suggestions are gratefully acknowledged.

thence did Jehovah scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." Genesis XI, 1-9. The Holy Bible, American Standard Version.

### *Preliminary Considerations*

The suggestive power of the Bible myth of the Tower of Babel reflects an important feeling man has had about himself throughout the ages. It is but an expression of psychological truth in ancient garb. God, the father, took away from his children one language in order to punish them for attempting to be as powerful as he, and so took from

them unity, harmony and lasting peace. The myth suggests that different languages create misunderstandings, destroy cooperation, make for differences that may even lead to war and destruction.

The survival of any literary product seems ample proof that the human problem it touched upon has not been solved, that the feeling it expresses is as true today as it has been throughout the ages. The Bible myth lends itself even today to a projection of our conflicts and problems, our feelings of guilt, and our yearning for unity and peaceful cooperation. Most nations conquering another group used to force upon it their own language. Defeated groups try by all means, and in spite of all danger, to hold on to their mother tongue. Immigrants in America who seek approval and acceptance are required to pass a language test, implying that a knowledge of English guarantees loyalty. The slogan *one language* seems to be the foundation for the formation of *one united nation*. People who speak another language arouse our hostility as strangers. The spreading of one's language is considered a kind of victory. *One language* seems to be the first step towards *one world*. A prime minister advocated the adoption of Basic English as an important step towards world unity. International languages directed towards the same end have been suggested by a former First Lady, by well-known commentators, by many different groups. The Esperanto movement after the first World War attracted many workers. A good many other efforts such as the creation of the new language *Interglossa* have commanded attention.

The idea in back of all this seems to be that unity, peace and love must be based on understanding, and understanding is seen as a problem of language. Only persons who understand each other, who talk the "same language" can work out their problems, their conflicts, in peace and through cooperation. The Tower of Babel, symbol of security, of power, of the fulfilment of man's dreams and longings can be completed only if men talk one language. He who con-

finds their language destroys their dreams of omnipotence. He divides them but to retain his own.

The patient but sophisticated reader may have accumulated at this point sufficient annoyance at this apparent over-simplification and distortion of true relationships that he will be ready to voice very justified objections. He will call to our attention the fact that language habits are not the cause but the effect of difference. It is not the language that creates difference but the difference that makes for modifications in language patterns. It seems then that the one who attempts to achieve the general use of one language for all in order to bring them together, in order to alleviate friction and destruction, really removes the symptom rather than the cause. One may assume though that the advocates of *one language* are aware of this and use their battlecry for *the new language* as a kind of slogan which is the symbolic expression of more serious, deeper-reaching efforts in social engineering.

The myth of the Tower of Babel seems to overestimate the power of language if taken literally rather than in its symbolic meaning. One is reminded of Sigmund Freud's *Allmacht der Gedanken*, the omnipotence of thought, which is an expression one of his neurotic patients used to describe the infantile feeling the emotionally ill attach to the delusion that words and thoughts are all-powerful and stronger than reality. The child believes in the magic of words and thoughts *as does* the primitive and the neurotic. 1) It is as if they deny certain aspects of reality, while the psychotic denies all of reality other than his own fantasy, his own thoughts; it is as if language rules absolutely although it has lost to a large degree its true function of normal communication. While we are all aware that the *function* of language is communication with fellow men, we realize that at times the intricacies of the tool prevent genuine communication and we understand also the age-old yearning for a restoration of the power man is said to have had before the days of his dream of omnipotence by means of the Tower of Babel.

The statesmen and public commentators are not the only ones who seem to follow the illusion that peace could be created were we to adopt one language. Students of language are similarly inclined. Very creative and constructive efforts of semanticists follow the same pattern of overestimation of language. We would like to quote S. I. Hayakawa in *Language in Action*:

"It will be the thesis of this book that disagreements of this kind — fundamental, doctrinal agreements which seem to admit of no solution — are due not to stupidity or stubbornness, not even to an unscientific attitude towards the problems involved, but to an unscientific attitude towards language itself. In fact, a number of apparently insoluble problems which face us in our personal lives, in our society, and our politics — and it must be remembered that the problems are formulated in *words* — may prove to be not insoluble at all when viewed through a clearer knowledge of the workings of language. It will be the purpose of this book, therefore, not only to acquaint the reader with some elementary facts about language such as are revealed by modern linguistics, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, literary criticism, and other branches of learning, but also to change his very attitude towards language." 2)

"Why is the world a mess?", is one of the questions S. I. Hayakawa asks and his answer seems to be the following:

"But to the extent that we too think like savages and babble like idiots, we all share the guilt for the mess in which human society finds itself. To cure these evils, we must first go to work on ourselves. An important beginning step is to understand how language works, what we are doing when we open these irresponsible mouths of ours, and what it is that happens, or should happen, when we listen or read." 3)

It may be well that quotations such as the ones above are not to be taken literally, but have to be understood in terms of their educational intentions. The efforts of Wendell Johnson 4) or of Alfred Korzybsky 5) seem to indicate at times that these authors too see language difficulties resulting in language confusion as the root of certain social and emotional problems. Does Korzybsky really believe that semantic enlightenment will help the schizophrenic patient to give up his delusions and to return to sanity, i.e., to a sound use of words?

It is not only upon the realm of politics, of peace endeavors, or of propaganda in psychological warfare, on advertisement, or on psychological help that the tower of Babel has cast its shadow. In science, too, efforts are made to achieve a *unity of science* through *unity of language*, to use once more some of the semantic slogans. The effort is made to clarify language, to "translate" one theory into the other, to unite different branches of science through clarification. Semantic effort turns its interest to different philosophical doctrines, to different ideologies, and in its efforts — perhaps out of understandable Narcissism — seems to "overlook" that it works on symptoms rather than on causes. 6) The efforts of the creators of a Basic English, Esperanto, or Interglossa, of the ones who hope to achieve a *unity of science*, or those who seem to assume that psychotics or neurotics can be cured if their semantic confusion is dealt with, all these efforts remind one of the family doctor of horse and buggy days who worked to bring down fever through the appliance of cold and wet sheets, not having realized that the fever is the symptom which tries to fight the infection, the true cause of the illness.

The differences in language may be looked upon as a symptom, and we know that every symptom, whether somatic or psychic in origin, serves a function.

The authors intend to look at language not only in an abstract manner and thus consider it merely as a tool of communication which needs to be sharpened — their intent

is also to look at language in its cultural setting and to try to understand the use of a particular language as a symptom for conflicts and difficulties that are inherent in the culture. We look at language, then, not only with a semantic but also with a social and psychological point of view.

Culture itself, even if it is our own, our accepted culture, can be understood as if it were a psychological symptom which will cause us to look for the inner and deep conflicts creating it. Such a point of view has been suggested by Paul Schilder. 7) Religious systems and dogmas have been studied along such lines, 8) and a similar effort has been made in order to understand political ideologies. 9)

As we shall later see and understand much better, any effort of science to understand, to explain, to gain insight, to arrive at clarification is countered with hostility because it is experienced as danger, as attack. It is as if the semantic clarification, the psychological explanation, the sociological causes we may find debunk the phenomenon under scrutiny. It seems to the writers that this too stems from the illusion man has about the power of language. Even Freud during the formative years of psychoanalysis succumbed to that illusion in assuming that the mere intellectual understanding of the hysterical symptom will make the symptom disappear. Behind this is the assumption that symptoms can be explained away, that they can be debunked; and it is because of this strong feeling in man that efforts at scientific progress arouse anxiety in many, and arouse passions against the new that is experienced as danger. It is useful then to recall Freud's comments as to the injury of man's self-esteem when he had to face new concepts as expressed in the theories of Copernicus, Darwin, and of Freud himself.

One may understand one's own attitude but that does not necessarily mean one must give it up. Some of the dark fears people experience when considering or commencing their own analysis are tied up with the idea that the interpretation, the explanation of the analyst will effect uncon-



trollable and undesirable changes. "Everything will be analyzed away" expresses this attitude.

It is not without psychological intent that these preliminary lines have been written. Their function is to prepare the psychologist and the psychiatrist to deal with a point of view as applied to his own science, his own professional skill. It is a preliminary indoctrination which is to permit the reader a new step forward, a step towards the clarification of his own basic tools, his psychological and psychiatric theories, his language. Since this effort is directed towards one's very self it may well be easier to look at first at others, understand them more fully, and thus reduce one's own resistance before making a direct attack a one's personal domaine.

The method of presentation we have in mind might not meet with everyone's approval. Most of us were brought up in a cultural atmosphere of "digests", and we expect from an author short, precise articles that are easy to follow, are digested for us, contain basic facts and conclusions, and do not require our time or real involvement. We are satisfied as long as we understand intellectually and we resent all attempts at involving us in a real thinking process. This paper will violate all these requirements, since the author is convinced that his point of view will only be appreciated if the reader shares with him the process towards clarification rather than "conclusions". This process towards the goal is not only an intellectual but an emotional one as well, and the goal is not *the* psychology but *towards better psychological viewpoints*. Kant opened his lectures with the promise that he was not to teach his students philosophy but how to philosophize. He did not quite live up to his promise and developed his philosophical system. We shall try to be more faithful to our basic intention which is not directed towards a new psychology but towards better psychological activity.

The student of the psychological and psychiatric sciences is overwhelmed by an apparent confusion. There are dozens



of schools, opposing each other, many different professional lingos or shall we say different theoretical concepts, claims and counter-claims, refutations, proofs, etc. This is true for both psychology and psychiatry. 10)

The author limits his present efforts to the field of psychological application in therapy, particularly to psychoanalysis and its different "schools". Psychoanalytic and psychiatric effort is expanding today and is becoming an effective social force.

That this is the case is not only a result of its own progress but points also towards the social need in our time. The second world war and the tremendous effort in the selection of effective personnel has made us more aware of the psychological problems confronting us. The many in need look for help and take it where they can find it. It is up then to those who give the help, who develop the tools of psychotherapeutic help, to offer the best possible. Research programs expand, and psychological workers have a greater incentive to examine their tools; and the main tool of psychiatric help is their professional, their own self.

We help through words. Our theories and our concepts are made of words. The communications from our patients are mainly made up of words. And we all are aware that our main skill, understanding and interpretation at the proper moment of feeling, depends to a large degree on our ability to understand what the patient is trying to communicate, through language proper or through the symbolism of the language of dreams, of actions and of symptoms, whether the latter are psychological or somatic. It may prove worthwhile if, for a moment, we were to stop looking at the patient and his productions and turn our interests to ourselves. A perusal of our own theories, their language and the concepts we employ might prove most valuable. A look at our own philosophy may help us to understand better just what we can do with it, what its possibilities and its limitations are.

It is as if we were for a moment to stop taking our theories for granted, and to examine them as if they too

were symptoms. Incidentally, we do this quite frequently anyway when we look at the theories of the competing schools. The authors wish to call the reader's attention to the interesting phenomenon that all psychological and psychiatric schools seem to find it useful to give a history of psychological thought and to show how the thought finally "developed" to their own particular point of view, the best and the latest one. Philosophers, incidentally, do quite frequently the same, and their effort, as the effort of the psychological indoctrinators, is directed at the debunking of the opposite schools. One seems to think that an "explanation" of the other school, its interpretation through one's own particular psychology, will destroy its value and effectiveness and will create faithful followers of the new trend of thought. It is interesting in this respect that the first effort is usually directed at an attempt to explain the psychological motives, the character of a particular person that led to particular beliefs. It has been pointed out before, that an explanation of its author's motives does not destroy or weaken a theory even though such may be the intent of the explanation. 11, 12)

We have mentioned a little while ago the psychological problems of ideologies, whether they are political in nature or of a broader function, such as a *Weltanschauung*. Here too the effort is made to "interpret" the ideology of the opposing group in order to weaken its influence 13)

It is fascinating that all these ideologies succeed, at least to the complete satisfaction of their followers in "fully interpreting" every other ideology, theory and what not, and that these followers fight the attempts of others to "interpret" their own irrefutable, absolutely correct and eternal belief.

Psychologists and psychiatrists certainly must be aware of their own attempts to "explain" ideologies, literature, art products, etc., particularly since they are insistent upon the non-scientific character of these productions. Science itself, indeed psychological and psychiatric science also, is

a product of our culture. And culture as suggested by Freud, Schilder and many others may be looked upon as the outcome of psychic struggle. The suggestion is made, then, to look at psychological science and also psychiatric science as an ideology, as a *Weltanschauung*. Similar suggestions have been made but mainly in order to debunk it. Professor Blanchette, in his *Philosophy of Psychoanalysis*, seems to use the concepts of Thomas Aquinas to "refute" psychoanalysis as a warped, mechanistic, materialistic, irrational *Weltanschauung*. Freud, on the other hand, insists that it is not, that it is a natural science. The point we shall attempt to make is that every science can be considered an ideology. This attempt is not aimed at debunking or "explaining away", but hopes to gain thus new points of view, new insights, new research questions, and to free the creators of scientific theories from the bondage in which their theories place them. In the latter sense it is true that language may block scientific advance. The authors feel that psychotherapeutic effort will be aided if the therapists look at their own tools even at the price of lowered self-esteem caused through the concession that their theories may not be the last and best but must be left open for revision, for continued change, and must possibly be given up if of no further use.

Whenever the scientist has dared to look at his own creations, at his own tools of theory and concept, he has been ready for new advance. We are reminded of Einstein's now-famous investigation of the concept of "simultaneousness" in physics that led to the theory of relativity although it meant that he had to give up comfortable ideas about the world of physics.

Ideologies, like symptoms, serve a purpose. To understand the purpose of one's own ideology from the point of view of psychology and sociology, to really know what the ideology means, does, and does not, is really an attempt at reevaluation, at understanding of one's own professional self. This effort, then, is not meant to be an addition to the "ideological warfare" in psychology and in psychiatry,

is not another attempt at debunking another's or one's own theories and basic tenets, but one at integration. We are reminded of the old story of Tyll Eulenspiegel who tried to get out of the swamp by pulling his own hair. Scientists do not want to be guided in scientific research by religious dogma. They must learn to deal with the problems of scientific dogma.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to study our main research tools, our means of communication, with which we construct our theories and concepts, our broad tenets, in order to clarify their function and to gain more complete insight of their and our usefulness and limitations. Our intent is not the creation of *the* language and *the* final theory in psychiatry but to find out what our own psychiatric "philosophy" and what the "philosophies" of conflicting "schools" really say. We who aim at the understanding of the communications we get from our patients are then to try to understand more fully our own communications.

### *Psychological Elements in School Formation*

Mephistophales to the student:

"Was diese Wissenschaft betrifft,  
Es ist so schwer, den falschen Weg zu meiden,  
Es liegt in ihr soviel verbogenes Gift,  
Und von der Arznei ist's kaum zu unterscheiden  
Am besten ist's auch hier, wenn Ihr nur einen hoert,  
Und auf des Meisters Worte schwor't.  
Im ganzen — haltet Euch an Worte!  
Dann geht Ihr durch die sichre Pforte  
Zum Tempel der Gewissheit ein .....

.....  
Denn eben, wo Begriffe fehlen,  
Da stellt ein Wort zur rechten Zeit sich ein.  
Mit Worten laesst sich trefflich streiten,  
Mit Worten ein System bereiten,  
An Worte laesst sich trefflich glauben,  
Von einem Wort laesst sich kein Jota rauben" 14)

While Germany's Goethe created his Faust out of the experience in and with his own culture one may readily see that Mephistopheles' suggestion seems to apply to all of our Western civilization, and perhaps to most cultural settings. The main tool of all learning, even in a gadget civilization — where many mechanical learning aids are available — is the human relationship between learner and teacher. All "schools", in religion or in philosophy, in science or other human activities, as can be seen in social and political movements, have their leaders and the members of these groups develop allegiance not only to the thought, to the theory, but also to the founder of the "school". That is, we believe in the words of the masters because we believe in them. We do not believe that words can create the world but we believe in HIM, and thus we believe, if our religion follows the literal meaning of the Bible, that "God said, Let there be light: and there was light". Psychologically speaking, it seems as if there is not much difference between someone who believes in a scientific theory or someone who is a religious follower. They both invest interest and strong feelings perhaps, in the theory or the faith in which they believe. The faith attached to the theory, the philosophy or the religion was acquired through the relationship with the ones who taught us. Therefore we find psychological similarity between the followers of a religious sect and those of a psychological "school". Uncomfortable as that thought may be one has only to think of the presidential address and its function, as it is peculiar to psychiatric conventions as well as to Rotary meetings. The scientific attitude, scientific scepticism, the willingness to modify one's theory according to observation and changing experience gives way to more simple forms of behavior, to group allegiance and the desire to be accepted, to be a part of the group at the expense of individual expression. The leader in his presidential address unites the group, and the tacit convention of not criticising, not discussing the president's address would indicate that even psychiatrists or psy-

chologists follow a cultural pattern that is not too different from the setting of the erudite Faust.

As a matter of fact, what we suggest calling *ideological warfare in psychology and psychiatry* receives its greatest strength from allegiance to the leaders of particular schools. It is fascinating to see for example how fashionable it has become not to be an "orthodox Freudian", as if belief in Freud was belief in a religious dogma. One rather wants to be a Neo-Freudian, a "modern". One wants to be different.

It has been said that the European pattern relates well to Goethe's "Wen Ihr nur auf einen hoert, und auf des Meisters Worte schwoert". 15) In the authoritarian culture of Germany or Austria it was a part of one's adjustment to follow, to be alike, to be a Freudian, a Kantian, an Adlerian, and the like, it is said. But here, in the "land of the free and the home of the brave" people believe in difference. Is it perhaps for this reason that Rank's *psychology of difference*, as he proposed to call it, found quite a number of able followers? We suspect, though, that the desire to be different is only the other side of the coin. It reminds one of the adolescent who — after having felt, fantasied through the "family romance," the *Familien Roman* to use a term Otto Rank has coined — now goes about trying to be different, to grow up and away from the family and the authorities of childhood. But the adolescent gives away his need for dependence, for emotional security, for love and acceptance, in looking up now to new leaders who help him to modify his ego-ideals and to find adequate self-expression in later adulthood. All the psychological groups which clamor for independence, for a new psychology, for difference, soon enough form their own "schools", find their own leaders. And if they were free enough to look at the psychological structure of their own creation they would find that not much has changed. They have now a "new" psychology, a new ideology; but the group and leader allegiance is the same as it was in the days of the Berggasse in Vienna. 16)

*Ideological Elements in Science*

We are afraid that the reader who has chosen to follow us till now will grow restless and annoyed because we have labeled his scientific and professional convictions with the term "ideology" without explaining what we really mean. He may readily admit the significance of the personal relationship in learning and loyalty to his teacher, but he also may want to call our attention to the fact that science and religious faith, while both are acquired through tradition, through the medium of learning from a person, while both are imbued with the emotional attachment that goes with education, show important differences that are also reflected in the emotional attitudes of those who believe in them.

This is true and no doubt we mean something very different when we employ the verb "to believe" in two sentences, such as, "I believe in the Holy Trinity," or "I believe in the Laws of Kepler." The difference in the use of the word "to believe" will become more clear, we hope, when we will be permitted to take time out for a moment in order to clarify the concept of "ideology" as used in this paper. The author has tried to throw some light on certain psychological aspects of political ideologies. 17) He stated:

"An ideology is for the most part a rather strange mixture of scientific and everyday statements (some of them true, some of them false), of philosophical generalizations and principles, of orders, moral principles, expressions of decisions and faith. Many people overlook the fact that ideologies cannot be regarded as scientific theories (false or otherwise). The latter are of a different logical nature so to speak. It is possible to prove or to refute a scientific theory.———This, however, is different in so far as ideologies are concerned."

He points out then that scientific theory requires "proof based on evidence", and that ideologies express not only what can be checked, refuted, or accepted as true, but also feelings, moods, likes, dislikes, preferences, and that the nucleus of



the ideological "weave structure" consists of certain basic tenets which cannot be proved or refuted, but are "believed" like a religious creed, a dogma.

A dogma, by definition, then, is the type of statement that cannot be checked. Dogmas give psychological security and we hold on to them even at the expense of having to give up our ordinary habits of criticism, and checking. The dogmatic basic tenets of an ideology are invulnerable even to sound suspicion. He who believes in dogmas does not question them, does not suspect them to be outdated or in need of modification. We believe in dogmas through the teachings of our educators. Our trust in them, our affection for them, perhaps also quite frequently our repressed hostility against them, makes it impossible for us to doubt their basic tenets. We are now believers, their followers, trusted and accepted members of the "school."

The author wishes to extend this discussion of the nature of an ideology to science in general and to psychiatric and psychological theory in particular. There is something dogmatic in science also, and certainly there will be many dogmatic elements in the young social sciences. The author received a letter recently from a competent psychological practitioner in response to a paper he had sent him. This friend of good old days writes: ".....Unfortunately I am not any longer a friend of the *Libidotheory*. I don't think it is tenable and think that it delays the progress of insight and of practical work wherever one tries to hold on to it. I hope I don't shock you with so impudent an assertion." The informal and friendly nature of the letter, which permitted the writer to be perhaps a bit more careless, or may we say more free with his statement is a good indication of the feelings we have when we try to approach the scientific beliefs which we hold as basic tenets with a critical mind. Even scientific theories are dogmatic in their basis, and as attempted change poses not only a logical or scientific problem for the one who attempts the change but an emotional problem as well. Change involves not only a problem



in regard to one's attitude to the elders who taught us but also in regard to the group who may want to hold on to the point in question, and may reject us as a heretic. Isn't it true that the group, may it be a matter of political faith or one of psychiatric conviction, turns its aggression against the deserter, the former member, rather than against those who never shared the point of view of the group and who may be the really dangerous ones? The deserter is fought off violently because he arouses temptations of desertion in the rest of us.

The interesting thing is that the one who invents certain basic theories which may be dogmatic at their very base may be quite aware of the dogmatic character of such theories and still believe in them. We think of Freud's repeated comment that he considered his Theory of the Instincts 18) the Mythology, "Our Mythology" of Psychoanalysis. Science rests as we know not only on observation but also on a rationale. Conceptualization, generalization and the use of general hypotheses, the effort to establish scientific laws, that is, valid descriptions, all are attempts not based merely on observation but also make use of theorizing that carries into our observation something unreliable, debatable, refutable, or whatever we may care to call the factors that are beyond observation and direct proof. This is not done in order to serve the philosophical doctrine of rationalism but because of certain advantages, certain functions we expect science to fulfill.

Additional viewpoints can be gained if we view the ideological aspects of theory formation as products of dynamic psychological processes, as if they were neurotic symptoms, or a problem of character formation, etc.

The fact that one can 'understand' certain aspects of the theory formation does not necessarily say anything about its value as a heuristic scientific hypothesis: like a symptom, a hypothesis is a compromise formation. It is in part a function of the Ego's attempt for reality adaption and reali-

ty testing, and in part an attempt at gratification, designed to give an answer to a personal problem.

On the other hand, the particular form the formulation may take can be viewed as a *direct* function of the particular culture or subculture in which the scientist lives: dialectic materialism then may become the frame of reference for exploration. For instance the need for quantification and the whole orientation to exact measurement and statistical formulation can be seen in relation to our increasingly technical capitalistic society.

In brief it can be shown that any hypothesis can be described according to the formulation of Bellak: 19) whereby every human production has three qualities: adaptivity, expressiveness, and projectivity. The hypothesis is designed to help in the adaptation to reality necessary for survival. The particular form the hypothesis takes — the *expression* of the hypothesis — is a function of certain formal characteristics of the individual and of his environment. Finally, the perception of the reality problem — (and the hypothesis is designed to grapple with it) — is influenced or shaped by the intrapersonal needs and tensions of the scientist, like any other perceptual problem. These latter two aspects form what one might consider the “ideological aspects” of a hypothesis.

Principally speaking one might say then that the “goodness” of a hypothesis is a direct function of the ‘quantity’ of adaptation in it and it is as bad as the amount of expressive and projective aspects in it. Thus, the progress of science consists of successive hypothesis which in part constitute a better reality adaptation and in part consist of expressive and projective aspects of the various scientists.

#### *Dogma and Cultural Function*

It has been stated that science has three functions: understanding, prediction, and control. It seems to the writer that this is only conditionally true in our industrial age.

Scientific efforts in epochs gone by were more modest 20) or perhaps it will be better to say had different functions, and therefore quite frequently different basic tenets. Scientists in the Middle Ages were more concerned with the glorification of God, and the power of the Church than they were with matters of production, of control. And even today we find scientists who are satisfied with more modest activities. It will be helpful to recall the delightful book by Hugh Gray and Lillian R. Lieber, *The Education of T. C. Mts.* It reminds the reader of different and separate scientific activities, expressed perhaps through different attitudes of the scientists, and for different purposes. There is production, invention, pure science, and the application of the classical mathematics of the past to the findings of the "pure" scientists by the mathematicians. The pure scientists have no direct interest in application and seem to be driven by curiosity. In days gone by almost all scientific activity prided itself in being pure and academic and the thought of application was almost immoral. (Even today there are learning institutions with this kind of ivory tower philosophy). This division of labor, reflecting different attitudes and different purposes, does create differences in "schools," in basic assumptions, and leads to different ideologies, different dogmas. Who is to convince a pure scientist for example that he should give up his dogma of "purity", that he should work towards application. His education, his whole make-up would be against it and were he to undergo an analysis one would see, of course, that his dogmatic beliefs in pure science are but a reflection of his emotional tie up with significant educators in his past.

While the pure scientist will be interested in understanding, whatever that may be, he might find it unimportant to contribute towards prediction and control. It should also be added that *control* refers to different matters in different situations as we shall see. To apply all this to psychology it will be clear that the kind of *control* Thomas Aquinas might have had in mind if he had thought in our

terms would be totally different from the kind modern psychiatry uses. Of course, he did not believe in "blind mechanical forces of causality" but he developed a kind of psychological philosophy that was to produce an ideology which would strengthen the Church, would turn the unbelievers into faithful ones.

The psychologist of the industrial age who strives for increased production and efficiency, who wants to select personnel, whether it be for the army or the factory, will hardly develop the concept of the *unconscious*, and we begin to understand that the type of theory developed has to do with the purpose in mind. The goal of one's activity is responsible, (i.e. we are responsible because the goals are our goals,) for the kind of interest we develop, for the kind of theory we shall employ, and for the kind of dogma in which we believe. One might say at this point then that originally the "dogma in science" refers to the goal we have in mind, the function we have chosen for our activity. But, as time goes on, as we develop "schools" and as we get followers, we start to forget the original limited function and our outlook develops now into a rigid mental set that ranges into other fields as well, and suddenly we develop not one psychological activity but *the* psychology.

We have oversimplified this concept, but perhaps we have given sufficient indication of the process in question so that it will be possible for the truly interested person to ask the kind of sociological and psychological questions that will give the answers to the problems suggested. While forming this over-all psychology we may even give lip service to the usefulness of other schools, and we may be able to tame our hostility and to restrict expressions of our feeling that the thing we do is the only important one, the true science. Psychiatrists and psychologists in our culture certainly do this to some extent, obviously because a part of their general behavior and attitude pattern is "democratic", which restricts hostility and the desire to dominate to a large degree, and channels these attitudes into permissible modes of ex-

pression. On the other hand, anyone who is at all sensitive to the social pressure that is expressed in schools and institutions of research will have experienced the opposite trend as well that tries to mold him into the pattern of the institution, that is the particular "philosophy", "point of view", "stressing of certain factors", implied dogmas we may call them, and tries to make him into a faithful follower of the psychiatric creed of that institution. This is expressed in requirements for the job, in subtle but effective efforts at training and supervision, in the encouragement that is given to certain trends and the discouragement that is given to others. It is expressed in the usual belief so necessary for any group that their group and their work express the best and the newest (work morale we may want to call this generously), and that experiences elsewhere while of some value really do not count. There are, one may assume, very few institutions where this type of school-thinking finds little expression and where a great deal of security on the part of the leader and the group permits the greatest amount of individual self-expression and leeway in the realm of ideological formulations. To some extent it is even true to say that too much self-expression endangers the group, endangers group research and effective work.

Some while ago we spoke about the research psychologist and it was suggested that a part of his ideological "weave structure," a part of his dogmatic basic tenets, are brought about through the function of his work, which is tied up so clearly with our industrial culture. The kind of "proofs" he needs in order to satisfy the demands of his ideology are reflected in his faith in the laboratory setting, the controlled experiment, the sharply defined concepts, the strong suspicion he has against anything that cannot be expressed in exact terms, in statistical data and in clear formulae. Any activity that does not follow the almost ritualistic pattern of his research mind (as satyriized by the trial runs of the rat in maze learning) is not "truly scientific". These psychologists of course do not live in a social vacuum

and therefore are confronted with other psychological activities which bombard their minds continuously. Their reactions to the "danger" they are confronted with are an expression we presume of the particular characters they have developed. In this respect they are not different from other people who have their own defense mechanisms against the new that arouses feelings of anxiety. The reaction of the world to the new science of psychoanalysis, the history of the psychoanalytic movement, are a good example of it and we assume that psychologists are not and were not different in their reactions from the medical profession and the lay world. English-speaking countries perhaps more than others have made an attempt at integration, since they could afford it, and it is interesting to see just what happened to the psychologists before they were able to occupy themselves seriously with the new science. A good sample of the ideological problem involved is the very positive and well-meant study of Robert R. Sears, *Survey of Objective Studies of Psychoanalytic Concepts*. It is a fascinating book because it shows that many efforts that have been made at integration. It is as if the psychologists had discovered that their own psychological ideology, their conception of what constitutes "a true science" needed expansion and clarification. They were ready to accept and to incorporate the new findings, the new observations and theories if and when it would be possible to "prove" them according to the standards of their own psychological ideology.

Sears states:

"The experiments and observations examined in this report stand testimony that few investigators feel free to accept Freud's statements at face value. The reason lies in the same factor that makes psychoanalysis a bad science its method. Psychoanalysis relies upon techniques that do not admit of the repetition of the observation, that have no self-evident or denotative validity, and that are tinctured to an unknown degree with the observers own suggestions. These difficulties may not seriously interfere with therapy, but when the



method is used for uncovering psychological facts that are required to have objective validity it simply fails."

This is a good criticism if we were to agree that a "true science" is defined as outlined above. We have suggested though that there are many scientific activities and that they have to be examined in terms of their own function, rather than in terms of the function of another science and through another ideology, that is a system of thoughts not free of dogma. Psychologists seem to feel this too. The author is reminded of a few psychological colleagues who teach academic psychology with the ideology of laboratory proof feeling that analysis is almost not worth mentioning but as far as their own therapeutic needs are concerned they speak faithfully of "my analyst" and we doubt that they ask their analysts for statistical evidence, for controlled and repeated experiments when they make use of the therapeutic experience.

Another example that illustrates the difficulties of scientific integration can be found in the emotional attitudes that exist between the academic physiologist, or pharmacologist or pathologist and the medical clinician. They resemble very much the ones between psychologist and psychoanalyst. The pathologist, etc., feels that the clinician follows 'intuitions' and empirical beliefs which cannot be objectively demonstrated and scoffs at him, while the clinician often feels that the physiologist, the pharmacologist or pathologist is some kind of underprivileged being she stubbornly refuses to see facts or maintains rigid standards which are only of textbook use. The differences described are due to the inherent characteristics of the different functions in different scientific activities. The clinician has to do with a type of problem which requires a certain type of response on his part for which he develops a certain frame of reference, a certain ideology, however "imperfect" for the time being, or from the point of view of the research man. His need and his opportunities for objective verification are limited.

On the other hand the academic worker deals with problems of his own choosing, under the dictates of his own critique and those of exact laboratory conditions.

This is meant merely to show what a difficult problem "integration" really is because it requires a focus on the function of one's activity. Already this has made the reader aware of the point we wish to make in regard to psychologies the primary function of which is therapy, curing, changing. The "proofs", the scientific instruments of observation, of checking, the search for confirmation, will find their definition through the purpose rather than through certain "objective values". If one were to decide if anything is "a true science" one must find out first if it fulfills its function. It may well be that it is a true science as far as the particular function is concerned but that it would be a bad one were we to expect that it serve other purposes as well.

### *Functions of Psychoanalysis*

It is said that psychoanalysis is more than a therapeutic technique. Ernst Kris and Heinz Hartman in a very creative and fruitful paper on, *The Genetic Approach in Psychoanalysis*, discuss also the three functions of psychoanalysis or, to put it into their own words, the fact that the word *psychoanalysis* is commonly used to designate three things: a therapeutic technique, which we here call "psychoanalytic therapy", an observational method to which we here refer as the "psychoanalytic interview", and a body of hypotheses for which we here reserve the term "psychoanalysis". It is important to keep this in mind if we are to understand the problems we are out to clarify in *the ideological warfare in psychology and psychiatry*. Psychoanalysis started out as a method of treatment, a form of psychotherapy, and its original function was an attempt at curing, at the removal of the symptom which led to the belief that its causes, inner conflicts, had to be removed through the treatment procedure. In order to treat we have to look not only for



working psychotherapeutic procedures, but we have to try to understand the nature of the illness: i.e., attempt to understand the underlying personality structure that made for illness. The desire to help leads to the desire to understand, to explore. The desire for control leads to the desire for understanding and prediction. The former is hardly possible without the latter. We don't know if this is historically correct as applied to the founder of psychoanalysis in whose days education, even in the medical sciences, and certainly in psychiatry, was oriented toward research, toward objective finding, more than toward application. We have but to recall the descriptive psychiatry of Kraepelin in order to appreciate the significance of this trend. Whatever the main impulses of Freud may have been, and the emphasis of his interests certainly shifted during his long and productive life, it is certainly correct to note that he and his pupils have made not only psychotherapeutic attempts but others as well, and as Kris and Hartman point out so well the word *psychoanalysis* has come to designate a good many scientific endeavors which we know are related to each other; but differences in terms of purpose, research methods, and underlying ideology we fail to recognize. Kris and Hartmann's discussion of the difference between "dynamic" and "genetic" propositions in psychoanalysis certainly points the way to certain important differences as we shall see later.

Differences of opinion as to whether or not psychoanalysis is a "good science" could be ironed out if the participants in such a discussion would try being aware of their own ideology, their dogmatic basic tenets, as to what the function of science is. They would have to judge psychoanalysis not *in to* but in terms of its particular function, its particular purpose, within a given problem that is to be solved. Psychoanalysis has opened so many new paths in many branches of science and of other human activities that it is certainly impossible for the handful of trained experts, usually therapists at heart, to be fully aware of

the goal of each of these paths and to then apply correctly whatever the new science—therapy, method of observation and theory—has to offer. This is true for other sciences as well and the history of scientific thought does not indicate that it was easier in the past or in other branches of science to reach the kind of clarity and understanding of the function of science in a particular application.

It is not only the "academic" psychologists and the ones who do "ideal research" who find it difficult to modify their ideological thinking, their mental set, but the psychiatrists and analysts also suffer from their own ideology. When they make efforts at integration, they too seem either to act out of their own mental set, their own "dogma" as to what is a "good psychology" or they try to "live up" to the demands of exact, "real" science and make efforts to "prove" that their findings are just as "exact", "reliable" as the others; that their analytic couch too is controlled experiment, etc. Carl Rogers and some of his students seem to even find it necessary to bring statistical evidence for the value of their "non-directive" therapy. It is not intended to claim that such efforts are useless but rather that they ought to be preceded by a careful analysis of one's objectives, one's function, and the necessary conclusions as to what activities, observational methods, "instruments", etc., are tied up with the function and thus define the type of science with which one deals. It is obviously necessary to get away from a value point of view. A particular scientific activity is not to be valued from the point of view of "ideal" scientific procedures but from the point of view of its own function, its own range of activities and the "instruments" involved. We would then give up the division of psychological systems into "good" and "bad", and we would learn to be more fully aware of their function, their way of operating. A functional and operating definition would take the place of an undynamic comparison with "ideal" conditions. This way of examining scientific activity and scientific propositions is not intended to keep

out efforts at improving, at integration, at constant movement towards sharpened scientific "instruments", tools of prediction and control (which in psychology and in psychiatry include the tool of the professional self) but tries to avoid the loss of the focus of one's activity, the function of the particular science.

To follow once more the suggestions of Kris and Hartman one may well see that the three kinds of propositions that can be found in *psychoanalysis* really do point up three functions, three activities. Therapeutic propositions such as certain rules of "interpretation" stem from the objective of cure. They are really instructions for control. Dynamic propositions tell us about the make-up of man. In a way they are no more than descriptions. However, they are tied up with the therapeutic proposition inasmuch as certain descriptions, certain dynamic propositions, make us aware of the kind of therapeutic propositions usable in a particular situation. This holds true for genetic propositions as well. They explain the origin of a symptom and quite frequently psychoanalytic authors do not know if a proposition is of a genetic or a therapeutic nature: that is, if it simply explains, or if its function is to cure. It is at this point that the authors would like to suggest the use of the term *interpretation* whenever the statement in question is meant therapeutically, aiming at change, and to use the term *explanation* whenever genetic or dynamic propositions are used without therapeutic intent. To give an example: *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, by Freud contains mainly genetic and dynamic propositions, no therapeutic ones. If however, some of the information in regard to the pregenital stages is given to patients at a proper moment, as suggested for example in *Technique of Psychoanalytic Therapy* by Sandor Lorand, they will then become therapeutic propositions aimed at cure.

Interpretation, then consists of therapeutic propositions, even though the "same" propositions may be of a genetic or dynamic nature in another context. A good many of the

pros and cons in the present "ideological struggle" between the different schools reflect, it seems to us, the unawareness of the participants of the true nature of these statements as will be demonstrated later.

Freud's psychoanalysis then, is aimed at research and at therapy. Otto Rank, for example, objected to this, feeling that the aims of research and therapy are conflicting ones, and his disciples in psychotherapy and functional case work would be inclined to feel that research interests and therapeutic interests should be kept apart. The true therapist would do nothing but psychotherapy while the research man would give up any effort at therapy and restrict his activities to mere research. Otto Rank who claimed during the latter part of his professional career that he wanted to be a therapist rather than a research psychologist did certainly make creative research contributions to psychology, and he would hardly object to the statement that the development of therapy depends on continued research, and that research cannot work if the psychotherapist, who is as important in the therapeutic process as the patient, is left out. The idea that Freud's research was often done at the expense of the patient and lengthened the treatment process is not without hostile intent, even though it is added apologetically that Freud was obliged to experiment because of the pioneering nature of therapy. Whenever we do not know how to help but grope in the dark and use trial and error methods we experiment — but not at the expense of the patient. The focus of the experiment is to find a new way of helping, not to collect abstract datas. The new way of helping, for example Freud's "experiment" to use free association instead of hypnosis happens not only to help but also yields scientific results in terms of many genetic and dynamic propositions. The experiment which introduces new therapeutic propositions, new therapeutic rules, permits observation that lends itself to dynamic and genetic explanation.

It is true, though, that these genetic and dynamic propo-

sitions in turn induce us to formulate new therapeutic ones. Statements about the *Defense Mechanisms of the Ego* would lead to ego analysis, that is, to therapeutic suggestions which would enrich therapeutic techniques. And in this sense it is also true that the differentiation into various statements as was proposed cannot always be done because the activities behind them are not clearly separated. We try to help but we also try to understand, to find. We try to understand the patient, our own reactions in the treatment process, and at the same time we are to react according to the needs of the patient. This very complicated use of oneself in therapy is reflected in the complex structure of psychoanalysis. Our effort to understand certain psychiatric or psychological principles then, is effort towards a freer use of oneself. We need to be clear as to what we are doing, and some of the clarity we want we shall acquire in looking at our formulated (and unformulated) beliefs.

Sometimes it is easier to understand one's position if one tries to understand the position of others rather than simply to reject the opponent's theory. This forces one to pay more attention to one's own basic tenets.

### *The Ideological Struggle*

Our paper would be very incomplete if we did not mention that the differences between a number of analytic schools are not merely caused by scientific disagreements. As a matter of fact it is well known that the first reaction that is always forthcoming in response to a new school is an attempt to explain the very personal motives for the action. We may recall Freud quoting Adler as saying that he did not want to stay in Freud's shadow all his life. About Rank it has been said that he was disappointed because Freud did not fully accept the theory of the *Trauma of Birth*. Breuer's withdrawal has been explained in terms of his sexual inhibitions, Jung's change of heart and mind with his own background and personality, etc. And number-

less efforts have been made to explain Freud's theories in the light of his personality, the cultural milieu in which he grew up and lived. Others have been described in terms of their desire to dominate, their unwillingness to follow democratic procedure. All these points may be correct but they do not solve the basic problem of genuine understanding of the principles involved rather than their genesis in terms of the author's personal history. It has also been pointed out that the differences are exaggerated because of group rivalries and other personal factors, and that the group rivalry itself leads to a new kind of leader cult. It is certainly true that every new group chooses new symbols and turns against the old. The new leader, — and psychiatrists are not different from social leaders, — expresses his difference not only in the additions he makes, but also he usually moves away from the old more and more. It is as if we could learn the new only through the rejection of the old. The adolescent who grows up rejects all father symbols, and the new psychiatric leader finds slowly or suddenly that all had been more or less wrong, and finds satisfaction in claiming that his is not psychoanalysis any longer but individual psychology, or will psychology. And others claim that they are not orthodox but modern, not mechanistic but dynamic and express whatever slogan they may wish to use. And we see that soon they choose their own vocabulary, their own concepts, and refute the old as if what they believed yesterday had been altogether wrong and even dangerous. While the expert may feel that we exaggerate he is probably aware that the educated lay public at times sees nothing but difference and is confused when trying to find its way through the maze of psychiatric ideology.

It is admitted that these personal factors, the group formations, the need to attract students, the different vested interests, the need for domination, and so on, that all these social-psychological factors, questions of economic and social control, of power, do affect the formation of psychiatric

schools. But this is not too different from other social phenomena in an individualistic, capitalistic industrial society. It is healthy and sometimes rough competition. However we are not concerned with these factors. While it may be intriguing for the social psychologist or for the sociologist to search for the personality factors that make certain individuals found and lead schools and others into followers who join them, and to search for the socio-economic causes of such phenomenas, we are not interested in genetic and dynamic propositions of school formation. We are concerned here with these aspects of the new theories or changed theories that aim at scientific clarification, at therapeutic change, at the improvement of the professional self. Our focus then is neither socio-economic nor directed at the personality of the school founders and their followers but is directed at the evaluation of their truly scientific intentions. We are, to use an example, not interested in what personality factors led Karen Horney or H. S. Sullivan to the formation of their schools, and what kind of people "follow" them but what they are telling us. What is usable for the advancement of psychiatric and psychological science in the light of its function? Communications of people can be looked at with different focus. We may listen to them in order to find out about their reality situation, or their inner conflicts, or the type of society in which they live, or in order to solve our own problems, and so on. We listen according to the focus we have. Here we are to look at the communications of our colleagues not just to understand them as persons, or to debunk them, but in order to interpret their communications from the point of view of our job, the development of a better psychotherapeutic science. They may have dogmas, as we do, but what do their dogmas mean in terms of their professional function? Such knowledge also helps us to understand our own dogmas in terms of our own function.

While the benevolent part of the reader may be open to suggestion, to new insights and to a change of his present



beliefs a good many of the reader's critical faculties will oppose the somewhat strange and obscure idea that certain scientific principles in psychology should be dogmatic in nature and not different from religious dogma. The scientific mind which has striven for such long a time to eliminate religious dogma finds it hard to have anyone tell him now that he too is not free of the "sin of dogma". The strangeness of this may lead to its unacceptability and one may be determined to reject a new outlook even before one has tried to fully familiarize oneself with it. It is for this reason that we ask the reader's indulgence, hoping that he may bear with us and accept an idea for the time being until he is fully familiar with its use and scope. He will realize later that we have not tried to wipe out difference between religion, science, and philosophy. It may be hinted at this point that the kind of propositions in science that we call dogmatic are of a different nature than the dogmas of religion. But since it is more the similarity of their psychological character than the difference in logical structure that seems to yield certain useful results, we will take up the logical differences at a later point.

### *Determinism*

Let us turn now to some of the generalizations that are used to express differences in psychiatric opinion. The first example to be analyzed is one that affects any scientific discussion, particularly where psychological considerations are involved. It is the problem of causality or of determinism. It is a problem charged with emotion for everyone who has had the customary academic training, and the mere mention of it awakens a good many associations from past experience. And while one may assume that it is a purely philosophical issue one cannot help but discover that psychological and particularly psychiatric books are colored by the particular views their authors hold on causality or determinism. Whatever the significance of that may be it is interesting to refer



to the fact that modern authors on physics seem to be free of the need to discuss the concepts of causality or determinism. Einstein and Infeld in their book on, *The Evolution of Physics*, seem to get along without the discussion of the problem of causality. It is as if they were to tell us that the problem does not exist for them, that physics has grown out of its childhood illnesses and is a true science today.

This certainly is not true for psychiatry and psychology, and the different positions of scientists in regard to the problem of determinism are symbolic of the differences in the field.

Robert P. Knight in an article, *Determinism, "Freedom," and Psychotherapy*, tries to combine the principle of determinism with the therapeutic aim of freedom of choice. While we agree with his basic tenet that all science, certainly also psychology, is deterministic we should like to throw some additional light on the true significance of the statement, "Determinism is a fundamental tenet of all science". (Quote from Knight's address) One of the authors, Rudolf Ekstein, in *Human Freedom and Psychological Science*, has analyzed some of the psychological and logical difficulties that have led to the misconception of the nature of causality and determinism. He explains there that psychological laws like all other laws are not orders but descriptions. These descriptions are never complete and therefore very frequently have to be enlarged in order to permit better descriptions of a more general nature. The misconception of the nature of a scientific law is caused through a logical misunderstanding and through our attitude. The anthropomorphic use of language in science has caused the logical misunderstanding. Our psychological need for a creator and protector, a powerful being enforcing a certain security, giving an order of things, has caused our inability to see the logical error. Psychological laws make us neither free nor slave, but they help us to understand why we feel free or slave. If the world were indescribable, i.e., if we had no scientific laws, we could not find the con-

ditions necessary for the experience of freedom. Psychological laws do not compel us but they give us some of the tools necessary for the achievement of emotional health.

The last statement needs some elaboration which will permit the authors to develop Ekstein's point one step further. Karl A. Menninger in discussing this concept of causality in response to Bellak and Ekstein's paper on, *The Extension of Basic Scientific Laws to Psychoanalysis and Psychology*, expresses certain questions he has about the problem of causality as follows: "I was under the impression that the principle of causality had been abandoned, at least in the sense of event x causing event y. I have long put stress on the fact that to speak of something causing something else was fallacy, that all we could say is that event y follows event x and bears some relation to it in a time space continuum."

"I think one cannot say that a mother slaps her child because she is angry. I doubt if it is logically correct that a tire deflates because it has been punctured. If one is going to speak of causes at all, one must say that it deflates because air pressure, gravity, the elasticity of rubber and other things being as they are a puncture brings about a change of conditions such that deflation follows. What you call the principle of causality I thought had long since been decided should be called a law of continuity or something of the kind". Dr. Menninger's comments then call attention to the fact that we are free to call anything we care to *The Cause*, that there is not one cause but many and while he would agree with us that the principle of causality is not more than our determination to use scientific language, our decision to look for causes whenever we are puzzled about something, he shows adequately through his example that it is obviously an arbitrary decision just which sequence of events we care to call cause and event. This is true as long as we remain in a field of pure science. In pure science one is logically correct in making anything one wants to the cause of an event, as long as one remains in a certain time-

space continuum. But if we think of psychology as a science that is not only to understand, to trace abstract connections, but to predict and control, we will not be able to make constructive use of a view such as expressed in Dr. Menninger's communication. And he indeed more than the research psychologist is aware of it as indicated in his work as a psychiatrist, as someone who seeks methods of control of mental and emotional illness. While in an abstract way it is possible to call many different events the cause of one particular event this proves meaningless in scientific application. In any applied science we shall try to find these key events that help us to control a certain event. Therefore it would be correct to say that the turning of the light switch causes the event "light in the bulb". If the bulb should not work in spite of the turning of the light switch we would then try to find the key event that "caused" this, the shutting off of the main power or the burning through of the fuse, etc. In a way then, one needs a more or less complete understanding of electrical theory, that is all the descriptions that are likely to help us in determining the key event the control of which leads to the control of the event (the cause of which we are seeking).

This is not too different in psychology. It is correct to say that psychology like any other science is deterministic, i.e., follows the law of causality. That means that we use scientific language, scientific descriptions, that we are determined always to look for causes even when we are seriously baffled. We might want to say as Dr. Menninger suggests that in psychology there is "only" a law of continuity. That means no more or less than our decision not to select a key event as cause but to enlarge our descriptions, to generalize, so to speak. It is a decision to remain in the field of pure science. This however is neither our nor Dr. Menninger's decision. In applied science such as in psychotherapy we search for *The Cause*, for the key event that helps us to control the illness.

Incidentally, the differentiation between "applied" and

"pure" science is also an arbitrary one and is misleading in a number of ways. First of all it suggests a system of values as if to say that one does a dirty job if one does not deal with pure science. Social science then would not be pure because the psychologist would step down from the ivory tower of academic science and might make his hands dirty in dealing with subject matter that should better remain in the hands of the politician. It also gives the appearance that application makes science less scientific. That may be true quite often. In psychotherapy we think it may be just the other way round. "Pure" psychology looks at a *homo psychologicus* but applied psychology such as therapy has taught us to look at psychological relationships, to look at man as he relates to fellow man, to look at the psychotherapeutic relationship, to see dynamic *Gestalten*, to avoid isolation where isolation hinders the formation of useful insight and to look for real key events, that is for the kind of causes that are important in prediction and control.

This discussion of "causality" and "determinism" should aid us now when looking at some of the positions psychologists and psychiatrists take in regard to it. It will permit us to avoid involvement in an outworn philosophical argument but to look at their philosophical positions with different eyes. Rather than try to prove that they are right or wrong, that their philosophical position is correct or ought to be refuted we shall try to understand what kind of decision they have made and expressed quasi-symbolically through their philosophical thesis. One way one might go about it was indicated in a paper by Ekstein on *The Philosophical Refutation*, which deals with the character of philosophical theses as far as their logical structure is concerned. Here, however, we are concerned with the logical and even more the psychological implications of certain theses that are applied in psychological science.

#### *Over-Determinism*

Let us turn our attention first to an important thesis

in psychoanalytic thinking which Freud characterized through the concept of *overdeterminism*. At first glance one may be tempted to assume that this means that certain psychic phenomena have more than one cause, are determined not through one event but are overdetermined through more than one. According to Masserman in *Principles of Dynamic Psychiatry*, overdetermination could be characterized through "a process whereby a single behavior pattern becomes adaptive to many unconscious needs, thus rendering it particularly fixed and resistant to therapy. For instance, an hysterical paralysis of an arm may be a combat flyers initial reaction to a crash landing, but later the same symptom may also come to symbolize (a) an unconscious defense against his own mobilized aggression, (b) a rationalized excuse for not returning to a hated civilian job, (c) expiation for a regressive dependence on a government pension, etc." The statement that certain phenomena in psychology are overdetermined may seem to mean that there is a real cleavage between physical and psychological science. In physics determinism rules while overdetermination is the basic principle in psychology. The naive thinker would then believe that events in psychology are determined through many causes while events as described by physics have just one single cause.

The clarification of this misconception is not too difficult. First of all it is possible to ascribe to any psychological or physical event as many "causes" as one cares to as Dr. Menninger has pointed out in the communication mentioned. On the other hand, if one thinks in terms of control one will find then that the term overdetermination does not refer to a difference in the structure of the fundamentals of the two branches of science but refers to certain control propositions.

The control proposition: "Change the fuse and the electric light will work again" permits us to say that there is just one cause for the blackout and that is the burned-out fuse. Follow the proposition and you will get results. This however is quite different in the case of the paralyzed

pilot. It is true that a "more complete" understanding of the working of the electric light needs a great deal of theory of electricity, that is a general description with many, many causes for the working of the bulb. One could even introduce a new principle into physics and declare that physics cannot be understood without the principle of overdetermination. The working of the light is "caused" by a good fuse, certain wire combinations, the working of the power plants, the heavy rain fall in the mountain where the stream is supplied that supplies the plant, certain weather conditions that relate to the gulf stream which is caused through certain geological effects, and so forth. Indeed, there is overdetermination as long as we remain in the field of "pure" unapplied science. But we haven't met the electrician yet who needs to know about astronomy in order to change a fuse.

The example we think suggests that the concept of overdetermination in psychoanalysis has no philosophical implications but really does characterize the kind of propositions which we have called therapeutic propositions or which one may prefer to call "control propositions". (We prefer the former term in order to avoid certain misunderstandings that may be created because of a certain use of the term *Kontrollsatz* in logical positivism). At an earlier point in our presentation we followed a suggestion of Hartmann and Kris and suggested that psychoanalytic propositions may be better understood if we differentiate between dynamic and genetic propositions. We added then, keeping in mind the therapeutic function of psychoanalysis, the concept of a therapeutic proposition. The principle of overdetermination does characterize these therapeutic propositions. To take up again the example of Masserman it should be clear then that the paralysis can only be cured if we look for the "broken fuse" but interestingly enough hysterical symptoms of that kind are overdetermined which simply means that the therapist will have to look not only for one broken fuse but for a number of other determinations. Or,

to make it clearer when he starts to work with the patient he will be able to help adequately only after he has "worked through" a number of these "causes". Overdetermination then simply is a kind of psychotherapeutic direction and reminds the therapist that he can hardly expect genuine cure if, let us say, he works only on the problem of fear of return to service. That symptoms are resistant and fixated simply means that the therapist cannot expect cure after one interpretation. In other words, the symptom as far as its cure is concerned is dependent on a number of determinations. Interestingly enough, it is always true as in the physical sciences that the psychologist could find many more causes within the person and outside the person that explain the symptom than he needs to cure it. Analysis could go father and farther and research studies certainly could go back to the superego of the grandmother of the pilot and so forth. One may say if one cares to that the symptom really is determined through an unlimited series of causes. The principle of overdetermination is simply a generalization of therapy, an indication of the kind of therapeutic propositions, of treatment directions we may expect in neurosis and psychosis. Whenever we hear the term overdetermination we really have to look for therapeutic propositions, statements that refer to the science of influencing, changing, curing, rather than to ideal and abstract explanations of "pure" science. In this respect we must admit that the moralists are right in assuming that psychoanalysis is not a "pure" science, nor did it ever intend to be one.

### *Indeterminism*

The belief in determinism then, is nothing else than a belief in certain types of control. One of Robert P. Knight's examples in the paper mentioned deals with the feeling of the courts in relation to psychoanalysis as a new threat of psychological determinism. Not that psychoanalysis, as R. P. Knight correctly points out, is any different in that re-



spect from other sciences, but certainly its insights into the psychological nature of crime and its techniques of control are quite frequently opposed to the practices of the courts. The courts then react not so much to a philosophical principle as to a method of control, to the therapeutic propositions for which it stands. It is easier, it seems, to defend one's position through philosophical slogans than it would be to do so were one to present the undisguised problem. The authors also wish to call attention to a number of examples in Knight's paper that deal with the problem of determinism in psychology as it has been used throughout the ages for the defense of certain methods of social control, mainly in the organizations of the medieval church.

In Karen Horney's *New Ways of Psychoanalysis* one finds, of course, also some comments on Determinism, and it has been pointed out by critics that Karen Horney has given up scientific genetic psychology and that she stands for a kind of indeterminism, or at least a partial indeterminism, in as much as she would admit a determinism of cultural forces only. Were one to take her comments on determinism or causality seriously one couldn't help but smile at the naivete of her logic, if we were to assume that her "mainly cultural determinism" refers to generic psychological science. No cause is more important than any other, that is, general descriptions in science do not know a stronger and a weaker cause, and there is no break between the different determinants. Her comments do not refer to dynamic or genetic statements as long as we remain within psychoanalytic theory per se. Her feeling that biological factors are less important than cultural factors simply refers to psychoanalytic therapy, to therapeutic propositions. It means that in work with patients she has found it possible to help and to cure with psychotherapeutic propositions that are of the cultural rather than the biological type. It also means that she believes that the use of interpretations of the genetic type is limited. It is interesting though, that the different use she makes of herself as a therapist, the differ-

ent therapeutic propositions she adheres to, leads also to a change in her own concept of psychoanalytic science in general. While we agree that it is useful to look for new ways, for new psychotherapeutic techniques, it seems to us that a rather careless overcoming of the old ways may end in dead-end streets rather than in an expansion of psychoanalytic science. At a later point we shall take up again the problem of cultural versus biological factors. Another psychologist who turned against Freud's basic tenet of determinism in psychology was Otto Rank. He felt that will psychology would have to free itself from the despotic forces of the instincts, and he and other therapists assumed Freud's concept of the ego as a slave driven by the powerful instincts and a tyrannical superego. The ego was nothing more than a weak victim of stronger instinctual forces, ergo Freud did not believe in creative freedom. Others claimed that his therapy was purely negative, and the like. Again one can't help but be impressed by the apparent naivete particularly of a man like Otto Rank who was familiar with philosophy and of whom one might assume some awareness as to the nature of a scientific law. He thought so much in terms of an outmoded concept of causality that he assumed laws to be despots, scientific causes to be kinds of tyrants, that he tried to free himself from all psychological theory and to go *beyond psychology* (A posthumous publication.) In this work he expounded the view that the psychologist, that is, the therapist, has to go "beyond" psychological science, cold deterministic science, in order to reach man, fellow man, again. Therapy is beyond science, that is, beyond determinism. Dr. Taft and others of the Pennsylvania School of Social Work have claimed that Freud was mainly a psychological research scientist, Otto Rank on the other hand a therapist, and therefore the faith of the former was placed in determinism while the latter negated determinism and believed in the freedom of the will. Again we have to free ourselves from the temptation of dealing with the philosophical issue rather than trying to under-

stand it in terms of its symbolic meaning. Rank indeed tried to go "beyond" the psychoanalytic theories of Freud. He left no doubt about his intentions. However, his comments on determinism again are really comments on the nature of therapeutic propositions he suggested to be effective. If he said that it was the present as much as or more than the past that determined the life struggle of the individual he really told us that in working with his patients he analyzed the therapeutic relationship in terms of everyday events rather than seeing in it certain similarities with past relationships of the patient as expressed through the concept of transference. Rank therefore speaks of relationship rather than of transference which does not say anything new about the nature of the particular relationship but about the nature of the therapeutic propositions to be used. His focus, then, was not research but therapy. It is not completely unjust if Dr. Taft refers to Freud's research interest, to his intention to work also in the realm of genetic and dynamic propositions. But we doubt her correctness if she assumes that Freud's research that has permitted the kind of therapy we know today is not needed anymore, is a thing of the past. It is as if she were trying to say that there is sufficient genetic and dynamic insight to permit for an unlimited expansion of the therapeutic function of psychoanalysis or any other kind of science.

We are quite sure however that this is not really what she means. Hers is an attitude about teaching, about the training of a certain type of professional worker, about the creation of a certain type of interest as expressed in the training that is offered at the Pennsylvania School of Social Work for social workers who are to do functional case work."

It is interesting, and Dr. Taft must certainly be aware of it, that there does hardly exist a psychotherapeutic school of "Rankians", and that his main influence is felt today in the realm of social work and has led to very constructive and useful changes in social work practice. It has helped towards the development of the concept of function of

which we have made direct and indirect use in the pages past, and it has helped social workers to see their job rather than to think in terms of an abstract psychiatric theory. The relinquishment of Freud's determinism here simply means that one can help the social work client with his request if one makes proper use of the function of the agency and uses the present relationship between client and worker towards the objective. One must not get an abstract case history with the full past, with "all" causes; one does not need an empty diagnosis, one can give limited help in carrying out one's function. Certain change is possible without the consideration of certain genetic and dynamic facts. We are surely doing an injustice to social workers if we seem to be satisfied with these very general and loose comments. But they may suffice to indicate that the social worker may quite frequently see his job differently than the therapist, that he will work not only with the client's self but with the function of the agency and the rules that govern the exercising of his function. Eligibility and requirements for service can be used psychologically and as therapeutic propositions they have their place in everyday practice. On the other hand we see that this new "school" of social work rather than really trying to be beyond psychology is trying merely to give up Freud's metapsychology and developed its own. The group is young and creative but does not seem to have really overcome some of the difficulties mentioned in the beginning of our paper. Their slogans while indicative of a good many new trends, of a creative use and development of the professional self, may lead to isolation if no attempt is made at integration.

We see then through these few examples that the slogan of indeterminism in psychotherapy or social case work is a kind of battle cry, a signal that points mainly towards a new use of the therapeutic, the helping self, and as far as the system of psychiatric knowledge is concerned it aims at that part which deals with psychotherapeutic propositions.

It may be correct to assume that new therapeutic

propositions usually do lead to a different description of the genetic and dynamic aspects of psychology. The latter however does not follow out of logical necessity but has to do with the way psychologists change, "overcome" old attitudes, and move away from those who have taught them. It is a personal problem rather than a scientific one. But inasmuch as research, particularly research into psychotherapeutic methods, is tied up with the personal problems of the researchers, the therapists, it is of an important nature and deserves the interest of the profession. So far the interest of the profession has dealt with it out of the need for defense, out of the need to debunk the new schools. The destructive aims, then, might give way to the efforts at integration. Or, do the authors, in suggesting this, still fall victim to the illusion of the Tower of Babel, the symbol of the kind of unity one thinks man has had in the dim past and which one has experienced, perhaps, in the days of one's own personal past?

#### *Ego Versus Will*

The therapeutic problems that represent themselves in the disguised form of the pseudo-philosophical problem of determinism versus indeterminism are expressed at times by different slogans. One speaks then of ego versus will psychology. We think that both Alfred Adler and Otto Rank would prefer to speak of the will rather than the ego. The assumption again is that the ego is dependent on more powerful forces that give it the role of a passive victim of the instinctual forces and the cruel super ego. This naive misconception of certain constructs of Freud's metapsychology have been dealt with by many authors, and we find no necessity to discuss it once more beyond some of the comments that have already been made. We feel it may be worthwhile however not to take the battle cry of "will psychology" at its dubious face value but to understand it in in terms of the decision it expresses with regard to psy-

chotherapy. The change of the construct stems from a change in therapy, and we suspect without being able to give a more concrete answer, that it also expresses the decision to change the goals of therapy. One might put it differently by saying that it may well have been possible for Rank and other originators of new schools in psychology to develop their changes in therapeutic technique within the framework of Freudian metapsychology. The fact, though, that they were never fully aware of the true consequences of a scientific theory, that they believed in Freud's metapsychology—unlike himself—in an almost religious, dogmatic manner, that they could not be different from their master without renouncing him and his language completely, led to the need for the construction of a new psychological ideology. From now on it should be easier for the reader to follow our suggestions as we continue to take up some of the problems of psychological work as they present themselves in the disguise of ideological differences. That is, the true intention is disguised, but the disguise, as in the case of the neurotic symptom, may become a force of its own. The latter fact is the reason that most professional discussions today seldom hit the basic intention and seem to focus on the surface of the ideology.

#### *Libido and Cultural Factors*

It is for this reason that it seems modern these days to argue the problem of Libido theory versus cultural factors. It is said of Freud and some of his "orthodox" followers (without an effort to deny the hostile undertone) that because they grew up in the culture of Europe, in the Victorian age, etc., etc., they overstressed biological factors, and that the theory of the instincts must give way now to the cultural factors of the modern, the neo-Freudians. Unfortunately, there are so many opinions existing that one feels at times that each psychiatrist has his own concept of the problem. While we doubt that this is really unfortunate



for everyday practice we believe it does not aid clarification. The authors have tried to reconcile the two points of views as expressed though the slogan "Libido versus cultural factors" in a recent paper. 21) They attempt to demonstrate in that paper that there are no different "realms" of science, that any dividing line is arbitrary, and that the search for causes does not permit a differentiation between more or less important ones, and that it is incorrect therefore to assume that biological descriptions are more or less important than those that are of a cultural or social nature. The differences between biological and cultural factors was seen in terms of the "order of magnitude in time". The time factor thus introduced would suggest that the cultural factors are "superimposed" on the biological ones, and the inclination of the authors was then to consider the sociological sciences essentially as biological ones. The authors see no reason to give up this point of view as long as they consider genetic and dynamic propositions only. As long as psychoanalysis deals with "man in general", with a scientific description of his psychological development, with the general intent to broaden and deepen our knowledge about man, it will be useful to build genetic descriptions of a certain order of magnitude in time into broader ones that are of a different, that is, a larger dimension in time. To use an example from the physical sciences, the law of gravity is "only" a special case of more general laws describing the relationships between different elements of the solar system, and therefore one may want to think of it as a subordinated law. This assumption does not carry any value point of view for the physicist. He knows what a scientific law is. Psychologists, though, seem to carry the value point of view right into the ideological struggle of the followers of the Libido theory and the ones who think "cultural factors" are more important.

The authors' effort at integration, a kind of compromise between the two points of view, while applicable for science in general, for "pure" science, does not permit an examina-



tion of the problem with a view point such as that used in the present presentation. It does not deal with the problem of control, and does not clarify the nature of these control propositions, that is, the therapeutic propositions. If one were to follow the vicissitudes of the libido, the instinctual drives in man; if one were to trace their fate from their early "primitive" expressions up to the many differentiations, sublimations, reaction formations, continuations, repressions, or regressions as they are brought about through a combination of environmental influences of different quantity and quality; or if one would rather want to describe man with the focus on the environmental influences, that is, the cultural factors, one would not really create two different psychological scientific systems. Both kinds of descriptions would describe the same system, but for a different purpose.

It seems to us that Freud's way of describing it did not stem from the Victorian age alone, nor can one explain his choice of metapsychology in terms of the sciences of his days. Of course, just as the classical physicists used every day language and everyday words such as "power", "current", "energy" in order to create their system of classical physics, psychology too made use of what was available and several of the Freudian theories are patterned after certain scientific descriptions found elsewhere. The Libido theory uses many constructs and "ideas" from hydromechanics, and psychoanalytic topology makes use of terms that at first had spatial connotations. 22) Freud's choice of metapsychology, his need for certain constructs, his preference for certain thinking patterns, is to be explained not only through his culture, the science of the 19th century, or his personality but also through his purpose. Since he was a physician his focus was the patient, the patient's illness, and the instinct theory permitted him to look at the vicissitudes of man's drives first. His first interest was to find out what was ill and only then did he proceed to look for the forces that "caused" the illness. We think that it was the atti-

tude of the doctor who works in terms of "differential diagnosis" that has contributed to a psychology that is not isolated from other sciences of life such as biology or physiology. The choice of the "biological base" can't be understood in terms of value, of a greater or lesser degree of importance, but in terms of a search for a method of differential diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy. It was a choice that yielded results, that is, genetic and dynamic propositions that lead to certain therapeutic propositions, key propositions that can be used towards cure.

However, these first discoveries led to many more. The first modest theory of the unconscious, the depth psychology, permitted more and more understanding of the total personality, and psychoanalysis developed into a psychology that describes not only the vicissitudes of the primitive tendencies, but also the vicissitudes of many other aspects of the personality such as The Defense Mechanism of the Ego. The new findings changed therapeutic technique considerably inasmuch as the therapist was able now to make use not only of his knowledge of the "unconscious forces" but of many other patterns as well. He learned to understand more and more what transference means in terms of relation to the analyst and to the world, what character means, and he also understood more and more of the subtle differences in family milieu; that one did not really find new techniques of interpretations but one found more to interpret because one understood more, and it became apparent that the patient can be helped more effectively if the fullest use is made of any observation that is understood. Indeed, this led to a good many changes in theory too, and Freud's constant change of his metapsychology is certainly proof of his creative flexibility and also of the tremendous potentialities in psychoanalytic theory that permit so much change and growth. One must only realize in amazement that he was 66 when he introduced the concept of the superego, that he revised his theory of anxiety when he was 70. These revisions simply mean that better, fuller descriptions have

been found, which then permit more successful work with patients.

One of the very vital findings of psychoanalysis was the phenomenon of countertransference. It permitted the introduction of the role of the therapist into the therapeutic process, to study him as a psychological tool and as a part of the therapeutic process. It permitted us to realize that chances for treatment success depend on his personality, his skills, certain strengths and weaknesses, his sensitivity for a particular patient's problems. One seems to agree today that the therapist develops his own way of helping, his own treatment personality, and in using himself as a therapeutic tool cannot go beyond his very self. In doing his work he gains certain convictions about therapy in general and formulates them in therapeutic ideologies. He may overlook the personality factor and then found a school of psychology that gives the impression that essentially new genetic and dynamic discoveries had been made while it is true only that he has changed his own therapeutic procedures in order to make the best possible use of his professional self.

One therapist may be more attuned to subtle cultural influences that have molded the patient's life and his greatest strength might be to sense them at the proper time and react to them as they are experienced and communicated by the patient. He, the therapist, might then "stress" cultural factors. This will be particularly true if his own analysis has made him believe in this kind of reaction to the patient. The way he has been indoctrinated will be followed up if the indoctrination was successful. That is true for the orthodox analyst as well. The previous remarks again have not been made in order to debunk one school, or to explain it away, but to point out that therapeutic propositions are not to be confused with genetic and dynamic ones, but have to be understood in terms of control.

The orthodox analyst who works with a hysterical patient might react differently than the neo-Freudian and both

may think they do so on the basis of a different psychological theory. We are thinking of a young girl who suffers from anxiety hysteria. She suffers occasionally from violent headaches, particularly when in the company of her boy friend. She is afraid to meet him because she feels embarrassed if she has to admit these headaches. The orthodox analyst may interpret her symptom as an escape and punishment for sexual temptation, an effort to keep repressed forbidden instinctual tendencies. The other therapist may interpret her headaches as an escape from a "test situation", the working out of a personal relationship, and he may explain the significance of this test situation in terms of certain cultural requirements "in our time". Genetically and dynamically each of them has said the same. It is true that both have chosen different language but neither of them denies what the other is saying. The orthodox one who "believes in Libido" will certainly admit and use during the treatment process the knowledge that repression cannot be fully understood without a suppressing environment, and he is aware that "reality" is not an unchangeable thing but a dynamic concept. The modern who "believes in cultural factors" will not deny that a part of the test situation has to deal with the concept of sex that is permissible in our culture that forces this young woman to be unaware of her sexual desires, to have no conscious knowledge of them; and he will hardly deny that these sexual desires are of a biological origin. Even if he were to outhorney Dr. Horney he would admit that man's penis and the woman's vagina are not cultural factors, but he may say that we "overemphasize" certain biological factors.

The difference then aims at therapy. Both may claim now that their respective way is the better one, and both no doubt have many successful cases to report and to substantiate their claims. But, isn't it true perhaps that their own treatment personality, not just their theoretical conviction (their psychological dogmas) decide how they will be able to use themselves and what kind of system of com-

munication they have developed in talking with their patients? They have developed therapeutic eyes, and therapeutic blind spots according to their own personality, and this will affect the kind of dogmas they choose. We are reminded of the quotation from Marx (cited in the introduction) according to which the philosophers should not just interpret the world differently but should think of the job of change. We are tempted to paraphrase him: "*Die Psychoanalytiker haben die Patienten verschieden interpretiert, es kommt aber darauf an sie zu verandern.*" (The psychoanalysts have interpreted the patients differently but it's their job to change them). This reminds us that therapeutic propositions are really "change" propositions, and as in the case of medicine do not explain but are designed to help, to cure, to change.

This brings us back to the thought of the "Allmacht der Gedanken". Isn't the idea that these different kinds of interpretations are of tremendous importance in helping the patient return to the Bible myth? Isn't it an overestimation of their significance if we really seem to think that some of these differences in verbal reaction to the patient are of utmost importance, even warrant a change of meta-psychology, of analytic theory? These questions are not of a rhetorical nature but aim at a clarification of the therapeutic process as had been attempted in Dr. Bellak's paper, *A Note on Some Basic Concepts of Psychotherapy*. 23)

It is an interesting sidelight in this ideological struggle of psychological thought that the lay world has taken sides also, and that particularly the newer groups find it very important to exercise an educational function and to enlighten the people on psychological and psychiatric issues. During this education, or group indoctrination if you please, efforts are made to drive home the correctness of the convictions of the newer groups and to "debunk" the old fashioned.

Liberal and other groups interested in social change have turned against the "conservative" Freud and his

"biological base" and have found comfort in the stressing of the "cultural factors". The psychological significance of this is clear, inasmuch as these groups think consciously or unconsciously in terms of social control. They are interested in those propositions that lend themselves to key propositions in social propaganda, in social engineering. The "more important" causes are the ones that permit control. Social engineering may help to control neurosis as a mass phenomenon but it cannot be used for the cure for one particular individual. Freud was not a social engineer but a psychotherapist (although he had mentioned jokingly that the whole world was his patient).

### *Interpersonal Relationships*

Another interesting deviation from Freudian psychoanalysis is that of a group of psychiatrists who are following the lead of H. S. Sullivan, Clara Thompson, Erich Fromm, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, and others. Their slogan which holds that "psychiatry is the science of interpersonal relations" has been elaborated upon by Sullivan. He expresses his basic view of psychiatry as follows:

"Psychiatry, instead, is the study of processes that involve or go on between people. The field of psychiatry is the field of interpersonal relations, under any and all circumstances in which these relations exist. It was seen that a personality can never be isolated from the complex of interpersonal relations in which the person lives and has his being.

Definitions of this kind cannot be understood if we treat them in the traditional manner and try to show up their logical shortcomings. We will hardly understand the Sullivan point of view if we ask him ironically as to the advisability of including education in psychiatry since it certainly is a field of interpersonal relationships. We will also hardly benefit from the objection that treatment methods such as a frontal lobectomy while of a psychiatric nature



do not seem to fit his definition. His definition is a declaration of the intention to describe any kind of emotional or mental disturbance that is of a functional origin in terms of the interpersonal relationship, or the chain of interpersonal relationships, that "caused" it. He and his group are mainly interested in these dynamic and genetic propositions that describe the significant personal relationships of a particular individual in order to arrive at therapeutic control propositions that can be used towards cure. This group is interested in the propositions that describe the "inter" of interpersonal relationships and its pathological effects. Everything else is left out or "minimized" as is possible when one's efforts are directed at therapeutic propositions only. It is true indeed that even these processes that are usually described under the traditional heading of Maturation can be described fully only if we take into account the interpersonal relations of the particular individual. The therapist might well be able to afford the luxury of denying or minimizing the effect of puberty changes and stress the peculiar nature of the interpersonal relationships, during these formative years. Of course nobody in the group mentioned denies the biological aspects of puberty, of masturbation, or of one's basic attitudes towards parents, the opposite sex, etc., but it seems left out of the psychiatric ideology and Freud's contentions in regard to *The Three Theories of Sex* are distilled to descriptions of interpersonal relationships. All psychiatrists today — if they believe in psychotherapy at all — realize quite well that treatment is only a specific case of an interpersonal relationship, and they must find Sullivan's ideology attractive since it focuses their attention on the job of therapy, on therapeutic propositions. It will be shown at a later point why Freud's concept of transference, for example, led us farther than Sullivan's or Rank's concept of "relationship" ever would. The new language, then, is mainly an indication of certain changes or stresses in therapy and as far as genetic and dynamic propositions are concerned has not yet grown towards a



theory of personality of its own. As is the case with most of the other schools it lives on refutation, on negation of certain contentions of Freudian analysis but has not yet developed its own psychology. It should be suggested at this point, however, that in the opinion of the authors the differences between the different schools is most likely not only a difference in language, in general slogans, or even in therapy. Explicit, genuine differences have not been clearly defined as yet but one may assume that differences in genetic and dynamic propositions are implied though not yet formulated. They will have to be formulated and they will have to be exposed to the reality test of scientific procedure.

#### *Non-Directive Therapy*

Non-directive psychotherapy was an outgrowth of the feeling that "direct" counselling did not lead anywhere. 24) It was the result of the growing feeling that behaviorism is limited in its application in a helping process. Realizing that there are certain dynamic factors in the personality which cannot be changed willfully, this school of psychotherapeutic thought went to the other extreme: the therapist is supposed to be entirely nondirective, passive, and the patient is supposed to find the solution which is best for him practically spontaneously. This attitude seems based on the faith that the truth will out, and that, if nature is left alone, all will turn to the best. The passive attitude seems in part to have been adopted from the classical attitude of the psychoanalyst without taking into consideration the special skills which he uses as derived from psychoanalytic theory and observation.

The followers of this trend of thought in the therapeutic field seem to have given up any effort toward establishing a generic psychology of their own and are quite frank in indicating that their effort is merely directed at therapy and that they only describe aspects that are impor-

tant for psychotherapeutic practice. One has almost the impression that they leave out what goes on in a person and study only what goes on between, that is "inter" two persons, in the psychotherapeutic relationship. We are thinking for example of Carl R. Roger's non-directive therapy which is closely related to the work of such authors as Rank, Taft, and Allen. Their publications seem to deny or weaken almost every contention of Freudian psychoanalysis but one wonders here too if this is not a way of declaring that they are interested in psychotherapeutic propositions only. At least so far a positive psychology of their own has not been formulated. They have succeeded in developing their treatment methods, their personal attitudes in the psychotherapeutic relationship. That may imply a generic theory of personality as well but this theory has not been explicitly formulated and therefore cannot be exposed to the test of scientific evidence.

Psychotherapy in its present stage has not yet developed to a point where its success or failure can be used as evidence for or against a theory. 25) Or, to put it in other words, genetic and dynamic propositions in psychology are not proven just because psychotherapeutic propositions lead to cure. Psychotherapeutic control is only one particular way, and an uncertain way too, to demonstrate that our understanding of a personality is genuine and permits scientific prediction and understanding.

#### *A Relativistic Point of View*

The examples touched upon have been used to demonstrate that the different slogans of therapy are mainly an expression of the type of control, of psychotherapeutic activity, that is used. It might well be that they imply major changes in the realm of genetic and dynamic descriptions as well, but for the time being it seems that the differences as to what "causes" a particular psychological pattern refer really to these key sentences that permit control.

The suggestion that the selection of "the cause" refers to control propositions or therapeutic propositions is derived from certain changes in therapy as advocated by different schools of psychology. It is an arbitrary decision, often arbitrary in more than one sense. It is arbitrary in as much as we have no convincing, final proof as to what works, what "causes" in therapy, that is, what kind of therapeutic directions produce change, and ALSO in reference to the theoretical "*system*" selected. We were interested in the system of *control* propositions, that is, in the area of control. However there is also a more general area, the area of *Prediction*: For example, certain childhood attitudes brought about through the educational measures of the mother "produce" a certain character which means that we can predict adult attitudes. The genetic propositions that are used to predict adult dynamics are then "the cause". But one must not use the same propositions in relation to control. In this sense it is possible to say that certain genetic propositions of psychoanalysis may be wrong if used as therapeutic ones. And someone who is interested in the area of control only may be tempted to mistake his control propositions for genetic ones. He may mistake control causes for causes that allow for predictions.

Our view then seems to be relativistic. Einstein's new theory of relativity obviates the bitter quarrel between the followers of Ptolemy and those of Copernicus. Basically, both descriptions can be used towards correct prediction. As it happens the former is impracticable and therefore abandoned. The ideological warfare between the two groups was really ended as soon as we fully understood the implications of their different modes of description. On the other hand, it must not be overlooked that certain empirical discoveries, improvements of tools, etc., require a good many minor changes of the theory even though the basic view point of the two groups can be maintained even today. What, then, is dogmatic in science, and particularly, in psychological science? It is not the fact, the observation, the

evidence. What is dogmatic is the choice of language, the particular purpose or function of our activity. Religious dogma holds that certain "facts" are beyond the need of proof. Scientific dogma holds that certain basic decisions in regard to the choice of language, one's basic ideology, in regard to one's purpose, are beyond the need of proof. The proof that is rejected by the religious is to test reality. The scientist rejects quite frequently "proof" of his language, his basic ideology, his basic purposes. 26)

We do not use the language of Ptolemy any more because it is impractical and obstructs scientific progress and would make impossible the development of modern astronomy just as Roman figures would not enable us to develop modern calculus. The ones who hold on to impractical descriptions hold on not to religious dogma but to the scientific dogma of unchangeable descriptive patterns. The religious dogma denies the scientific test of reality contentions and the scientific one — or should we say the logical dogma — prevents us from a fuller exploration of reality.

#### *Our Dogma, Choice and Awareness*

The authors, as will be clear to the reader by now, also of course, have a psychiatric ideology. The ideological nucleus of their psychological convictions consists in the choice of psychoanalytic metapsychology, that is, psychoanalytic descriptive structures, even though they have tried to integrate certain findings of other schools.

It might seem difficult to understand why we attempt at first to tear down what we have called the dogma in psychological science, and then confess not only that we have sinned but that we shall continue to hold on to Freudian metapsychology. The feeling of strangeness might give way however to an identification with a process of clarification that was not really aiming at semantic destruction but at an evaluation of our professional selves and at an attempt towards growth and integration. The paper indeed is a

projection of our own struggle with the intellectual and professional environments we have been exposed to, an attempt to overcome, not in others but in ourselves, the sin of the unconscious dogma in science.

It is difficult to discover why one holds on to a certain psychological ideology. We are quite aware that the very first "psychological climate" in which one grows up, one's own personal analysis, one's gratitude to teachers, one's allegiance to the group, one's desire to meet with approval, and one's difficulty in giving up a certain mental set, that all these factors tend to establish a definite pattern, a definite psychological ideology, that is not only a knowledge of and an interest in certain facts but also a preference for a certain language in order to describe it, certain theories that seem to lend themselves best towards understanding and prediction. However, there is more to it. Our preference for Freudian metapsychology stems from our conviction that it has the greatest heuristic value. We may find it difficult to explain just what we mean when we employ the term Libido but we may prefer to hold on to this mythological concept, this psychoanalytic dogma because it helped us to learn a great deal about the workings of the human mind. We may not quite know what to do about the vague concept of the unconscious but again it brought us nearer to the understanding of the psychology of personality. One might want to accept Sullivan's suggestion and say that a person is "unaware" of a certain tendency in him rather than follow Freud's metapsychology and say that he is unconscious of this tendency. No doubt much and perhaps all we know about a particular person can be expressed in the language that is suggested by Sullivan. One may give up concepts such as repression and say that somebody puts something out of awareness, and that is at times quite useful in therapeutic work when one speaks to the patient, but the authors wonder if it would have been possible with this type of language to find out what is meant for example by regression. We speak of practical impossibility rather than

logical impossibility. One could think of a logical and mathematical genius who could have invented calculus with Roman figures. While this is plausible one is justified in saying that it is practically impossible. Again, it is plausible that someone might have been able to find certain psychological laws in employing the term of relationship only, rather than using the one of transference. But we realize that the choice of the term permitted the practical solution of many psychological problems even though a certain vagueness about it may give rise to a good many misunderstandings.

The vagueness of psychoanalytic concepts, the fact that Freud and others applied them loosely and changed their meanings frequently was attacked, and the discontent of the academic research psychologist who tried to put these concepts to the test of rigorous laboratory requirements was one of the many causes of strong resistance against the new science. It seems to us that the nature of the field demanded that kind of language. The theories of psychoanalysis proved to be flexible and permitted change and wide application. Freud's metapsychology can be compared to a field without clear boundaries. It is open for expansion as soon as more objective data are available and permit such expansion. The lack of boundaries of course has its drawbacks also, and at times the searching mind gets lost in the fog of unexplored fields, and his half-familiarity with the foggy borderland may induce him to rush formulations and assumptions that will not stand up against more careful inquiries. We may then get lost and presume a poorly defined death instinct or a trauma of birth, or we may apply psychoanalytic principles to other scientific areas in the social sciences, not being sure of the foundation of all science, the fact, and quite unclear about the language elements that are to serve the function of description and explanation.

It is the task of the psychological worker, then, to continuously recheck his facts, to find new ones and to be aware of the language tools he is using. He must continuously

examine his language and its psychological implications in terms of selection of fields of interest. He must be aware of the ideological part of his science, and while he may hold on to his particular pet dogmas in science, he must not close his eyes and be afraid to examine them. Whenever the limitations of his ideological structure in science become apparent in doing a particular job he will have to change some of the ideological structure or give it up completely. One may think again of the example Freud set us when he was willing to limit the mythological concept of Libido and permitted the introduction of aggression in terms of the death instinct. He changed major parts of the ideological structure of psychoanalysis when he was 64 and later when he was 70 years of age. While a particular theory with all its ideological implications may hold us in its spell, we must never forget that its value is in describing all psychological facts rather than forcing us to "adjust" the facts to its implied dogma.

### *Suggestions and Outlook*

While the above may suggest a different outlook on psychiatric and psychological theories it is in its present form a mere stimulus at best for research along such lines. We ought to be interested in the personality of the psychiatrist and its influence upon his particular choice of ideology. The contention that different psychiatric ideologies refer mainly to changes in therapy can be examined on a laboratory level. Completely recorded analyses of psychiatrists of different schools can be examined from the point of view of the language and content structure of interpretations used, and from the point of view of their effect. Psychiatrists of different schools rather than refuting their opponents would have to try to state their theories and findings in positive and explicit terms. The effort would have to be made to overcome the habit of stating differences in broad "irrefutable" philosophical terms in order to allow scientific



checking. An effort also ought to be made to understand completely the true meanings of one's own ideology, and to understand the other school as well. We must reexamine our goals, and we must try to communicate with each other rather than hiding from each other through voluntary school ghettos, through unclear language.

All these suggestions will not wipe out differences but they may aid towards the creation of a more productive research climate for all of us. Ours is a young and expanding science with an unexplored field, and with rapid advance into unknown regions. It is for this reason that a never-ending effort towards clarification, towards rechecking, towards getting together must be made. Even now, in closing this paper we begin to be dissatisfied with the small degree of clarity we have achieved. The achievement of clarity in our work, in our function, is a continued process. The process we have in mind is not only an intellectual one. It is an emotional one as well, a psychological process of rise in clarity that does not permit us to stop climbing. In the field of philosophy a similar suggestion has been made by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. He suggests that we throw away the ladder of analysis after we have climbed up on it. But since psychological science does not know any boundaries we must continue climbing and thus require new ladders of clarification. The task of the psychological worker, then, is to understand himself and others. Such understanding includes an examination of his tools of understanding, his descriptive and explaining means. And this task is not only an intellectual one for the learned mind. It requires an emotional maturity that permits growth. We might well say that it needs a strong faith, a strong ideology that includes the intellectual as well as the emotional aspects of man. Our own ideology thus can be expressed best in the words of Sigmund Freud:

“THE VOICE OF THE INTELLECT IS SOFT BUT IT IS PERSISTENT”.

## FOOTNOTES

1. A careful analysis of this statement would have to clarify the differences of primitive, infantile and neurotic "belief" in the magic of words.
2. S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Action*, p. 8.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
4. Johnson, W., *People in Quandaries*
5. Korzybsky, A., *Manhood and Humanity*, Science- and Sanity, etc.
6. Ichheiser, G., *Why Psychologists tend to overlook certain "Obvious" Facts*, *Phil. Sci.*, 1943, 10, 204-207
7. Schilder, P., *Cultural Patterns and Constructive Psychology*. *Psychoanal. Rev.*, 27, No. 2, pp. 159-176
8. Fromm, E., *Die Entwicklung des Christudogma*.
9. Ekstein, R., *Ideologies in Psychological Warfare*.
10. It is perhaps well to recall that the two words do not refer to totally different sciences but have derived their present meaning from a culturally-influenced division of labor. Freud spoke of himself as a psychologist though we would prefer perhaps to call him a psychiatrist, since the main intent of his endeavors was directed at an attempt to cure. Psychological work with a psychotherapeutic intent is preferably called psychiatry, while the name psychology is reserved for activities that aim at research, at measuring, at testing, etc. It is evident, though, that a number of psychiatric activities, in fact, a great part of the field of psychiatry, is non-psychological in nature. It is also more and more accepted that a great part of the work of the psychologist is psychotherapeutic in nature. It will be increasingly difficult to arrive at a meaningful description of the difference between psychology and psychiatry, since it will hardly prove satisfactory to seek the difference in license, in vested interest.
11. Barbu, V., *What Schools of Psychoanalysis are There? In Are You Considering Psychoanalysis?* edited by Horney, K.
12. Raskin, N., *"The Development of Non-Directive Therapy"*.
13. Karl Marx was quite aware of this when he wrote in his *Zwoelf Thesen Gegen Feuerbach*: "Die Philosophen haben die Welt verändert." — Philosophers have interpreted the world in many ways, but the task is to change it.
14. From Goethe's "Faust".  
 "In what this science touches,  
 It would be so hard to shun the false, misleading way;  
 So much of hidden poison lies therein,  
 You scarce can tell it from its medicine.  
 'Tis best here too that only one be heard

And that you sear them by the master's word.  
 Upon the whole — to words stick fast!  
 Enter the templed hall of Certainty .....

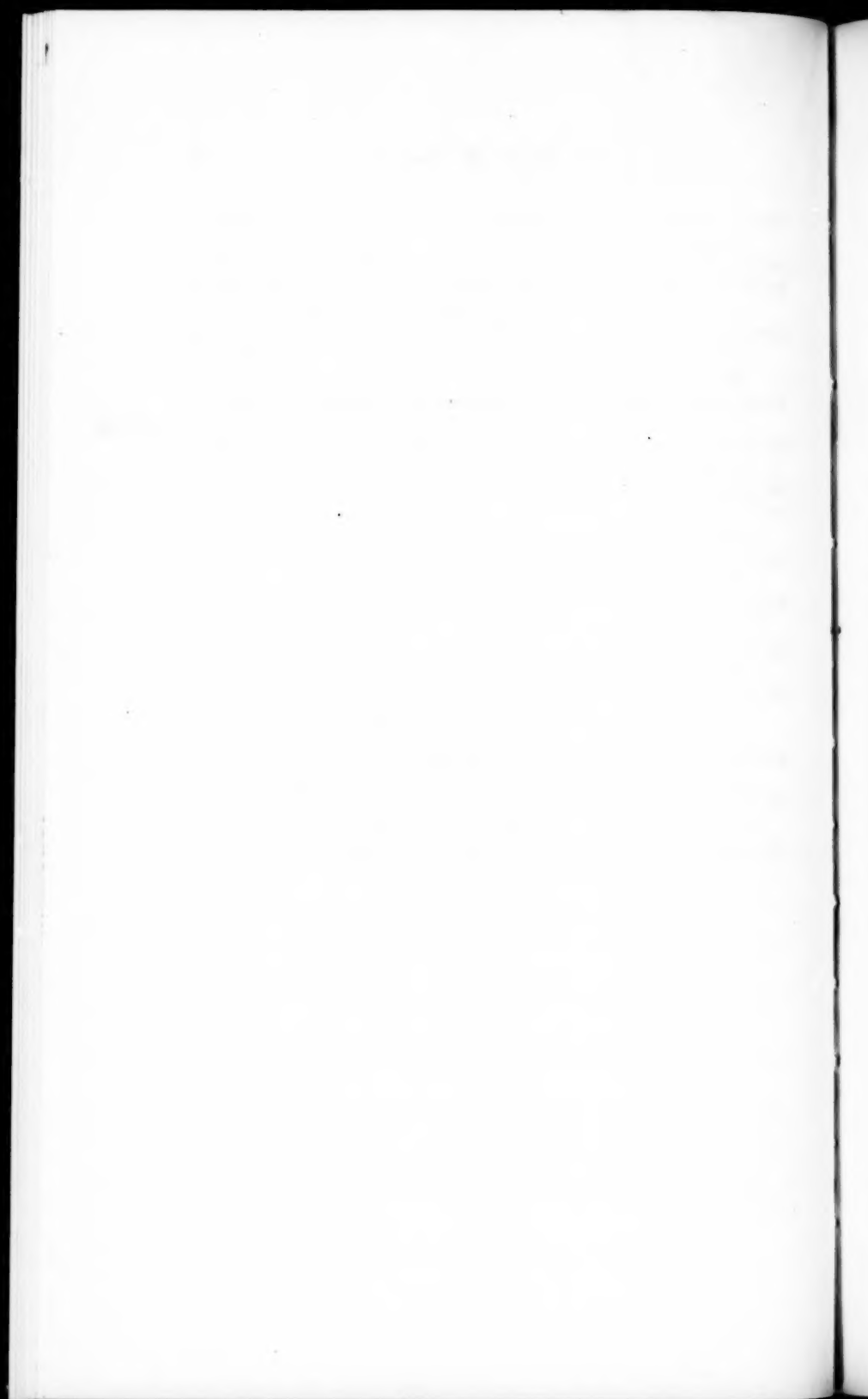
For at the point where concepts fail,  
 At the right time a word is thrust in there.  
 With words we fitly can our foes assail,  
 With words a system we prepare,  
 Words we quite fitly can believe,  
 Nor from a word a mere iota thief.

15. If you only listen to one, and when you have absolute confidence in the words of the master.
16. Location of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Institute, now rechristened Freudgasse.
17. Ekstein, R., **Ideologies in Psychological Warfare.**
18. The terms and "Theory of the Libido" and "Theory of the Instincts" were used interchangeably. See for example allusion to Mythology on page 131 in "New Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis", W. W. Norton & Co. New York 1933
19. L. Bellak, **The Problem of Projection**
20. A sociology of science would remind us though that some attempts in days gone by, such as the search for the "perpetuum mobile" can hardly be characterized as modest.
21. Bellak and Ekstein, **The Extension of Basic Scientific Laws to Psychology.**
22. Some of the difficulties psychological science encounters in having to use language material from other areas, other realms of science, in having to use metaphors (such as the one just mentioned: realm of science) have been discussed elsewhere. (Ekstein Rudolf: **The Language of Psychology and of Evryday Life.**
23. Bellak, Leopold: "A Note on Some Basic Concepts of Psychotherapy." *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 108: 137-141. August 1948
24. A recent article by Thorne, for example, disputes this. (**Principles of Directive Counseling and Psychotherapy**).
25. The "proof" of a theory depends at first on one's particular criteria as to what does constitute a proof or a refutation. See: Ekstein: **The Philosophical Refutation.**
26. One is reminded of Nietzsche's: "Die Menschen werden solange an einen Gott glauben als sie an die Grammatik glauben", and one feels tempted to paraphrase him: "Scientists will believe in the scientific dogma as long as they believe in grammar."

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## THE BLAZING SUN\*

*A Psychoanalytic Approach to Van Gogh*

Jacques Schnier

The lives of artists provide us with a rich and abundant storehouse of material for understanding man's inner life. Among visual artists of modern time Van Gogh is one of the most fruitful subjects for psychoanalytic investigation. In addition to his countless objectified phantasies in the form of paintings and drawings, we possess hundreds of long letters written to his brother Theo in which he freely describes his affective feelings regarding his individual paintings in particular and art, love, and life in general. It is this collection of letters which provides us with deepest insight into Van Gogh's inner life, for scattered throughout them are innumerable passages that are practically in the nature of free associations. Many of the letters were written at intervals of two to three days.

Van Gogh's name recalls to many of us a number of the most brilliantly colored canvases of the last half century painted by this great artist. These paintings include his majestic landscape and orchard scenes from Southern France, "The Sail Boats of St. Maries", "The Drawbridge at Arles", "Field of Corn", and his famous "Bedroom" and "Sunflower" canvases. By means of color reproductions, Van Gogh's paintings have been made available even to those who have never seen an original. So popular have they become that today they occupy places in modest homes formerly hung with chromolithographs.

Van Gogh's paintings were produced at a terrific speed. During the four years from 1886 to 1890 he produced over 600 paintings. This is slightly less than Cezanne's output in a period ten times as long and four times that of Seurat in a space of ten years. 1) His prolificness is partly explained by his ability to work directly in paint on canvas. It was not necessary for him to sit down and think out all his



compositions through a progression of sketches and more complete drawings. His enormous productivity can also be partly accounted for by the fervor with which he threw himself into his work. At times he painted from morning to night. After periods of emotional upset he worked in a frenzy that astonished observers. One of his last landscapes, now a museum piece, he painted in less than two hours. On one occasion while he was living in a private sanitarium at St. Remy he remained in his room for two months without going out of doors. During much of this time he painted continuously for hours on end.

The many orders Van Gogh sent his brother for paint supplies disclose his color preference. In Southern France, during his Arles period, which is considered the high point of his career, he ordered chrome yellows in great abundance. Excluding white, his orders for yellows exceeded all other colors. 2) This is the color he used so profusely in those canvases which more than any others make his work world famous. His "Sunflowers", "Market Gardens", "Field of Corn", "Sower", "Reaper", and many self-portraits were all characterized by predominantly, brilliant yellow. In numerous other canvases, a dazzling yellow sun shines down and permeates the landscape with its intense heat. This blazing sun with its ruling yellow color is so conspicuous in many of his paintings that Van Gogh is referred to by some writers as the "painter of the sun". One of his biographers has written, "He did not love sunshine; he loved the Sun; and it was the latter he wanted to paint not the former. When he writes: 'how beautiful is yellow', this is not merely the sensual reaction of a painter, but the confession of a man for whom yellow was the color of the sun, a symbol of warmth and light. Yellow aroused ecstasy first as an idea in the man, then as a color in the artist. Thus the sunflowers which he painted rise above the significance of ordinary still-life, and he himself says that they produce an effect like that of stained-glass windows of Gothic churches".

In addition to those canvases from the South by which he is best known, there are many other characteristic subjects from Van Gogh's period. While in Holland and Belgium he painted such subjects as potato-diggers, weavers, peasants and landscapes featuring old cottages, with monotonous regularity. All these canvases are painted in a low muddy key. They seem strongly influenced by the *chiaroscuro* technique so characteristic of the early Dutch painters. Not until Van Gogh moved to Paris to live with his brother did his palette take on more colorful hues. In Paris he made the acquaintance of Gauguin, Bernard, Pissaro and other painters and was brought in immediate contact with the colorful radiant French impressionistic style of painting. Color gradually came more and more to dominate his paintings and towards the end of his career they had the quality of ferocious outbursts of chromatic tones.

There is no need to defend Van Gogh as an artist. His paintings have already received international recognition and examples of his work are now in the collections of leading art museums of the world. For color and composition his "Bedroom at Arles" and "Outdoor Cafe by Starry Night" are masterpieces of painting. His still-life paintings of "Sunflowers" have never been surpassed. It is probable that art-lovers have acquired more color reproductions of paintings by Van Gogh than reproductions by any other artist. Numerous books, catalogs, and portfolios have been published on his work. Already attempts have been made to forge his style and experts have been called upon to pass judgment on suspected copies.

In the presence of such creative accomplishment psychoanalysis can only remain silent. The appreciation of Van Gogh's painting can never be detracted from or added to by any interpretation psychoanalysis might make.

As psychoanalysts, however, we may concern ourselves with Van Gogh's emotional life. That he was subject to epileptic seizures, severe depression and pronounced introversion is common knowledge to anyone who has read his

letters or his biography. Practically the entire output of his last two years were produced while he was in an institution. He had periods of calm and lucidity of mind alternating with spells of great excitement or attacks. Sometimes an attack would come over him while he was in the fields in the midst of painting. During his attacks he shouted and talked incoherently and had hallucinations of hearing strange sounds and voices, and of seeing horrible forms which did not exist. As his attacks occurred with greater frequency he felt he was no longer fit to govern himself or his affairs and asked that he be put in an asylum. 4)

Van Gogh also had great difficulty getting along with people. There was something in his attitude when speaking with them that made most of them dislike him. Whereas on the one hand he was humble, generous and considerate; on the other hand he was hypersensitive, irritable, and displayed a strong will to dominate. Notwithstanding his humble attitude, he was highly opinionated and over-critical of most individuals, especially regarding matters pertaining to art. Van Gogh, himself, recognized that he was out of his element in society and was very depressed and discouraged about it.

That one of Van Gogh's main symptom complexes was epilepsy is suggested not only by diagnoses made by doctors who attended him but also by his many detailed descriptions of his own feelings and actions in connection with his attacks. In his letters are passages such as these: "As far as I can make out the doctor here is inclined to consider what I have as some sort of epileptic attack". 5) "I think Monsieur Peyron (doctor at St. Remy) is right when he says that I am not, strictly speaking mad, for my mind is absolutely normal in between and even more so than formerly. But in the attacks it is terrible and I lose consciousness of everything." 6) "There is someone here who has been shouting and talking for a fortnight. He thinks he hears voices and words in the echoes of the corridors . . . . , in my case it was sight and hearing at the same time, which according

to what Rey (hospital doctor at Arles) told me is usual in the beginning of epilepsy. Then the shock was such that it sickened me even to make a movement and nothing would have pleased me better than never to have wakened again."

7) "It is rather queer . . . . that the result of this terrible attack is that there is hardly any very definite desire or hope left in my mind, and I wonder if this is the way one thinks, when with the passions dying out one descends the hill instead of climbing it." 8)

The word *epilepsy* is a term under which are grouped a great variety of conditions which in general are characterized by sudden and relative transient attacks. These attacks usually involve spells of unconsciousness and convulsions of the voluntary and involuntary musculature. "But the outlines of this picture are quite lacking in precision. The seizures, so savage in their onset, accompanied by biting of the tongue and incontinence of urine and working up to the dangerous *status epilepticus* with its risk of severe self-injuries may, nevertheless, be reduced to brief periods of absence, or rapidly passing attacks of vertigo, or may be replaced by short spaces of time during which the patient does something out of character, as though he were under the control of his unconscious." 9) Such attacks, however, are only the outward manifestations of a wide variety of conditions ranging all the way from emotional disturbances and neuroses of purely psychological origin, to the psychosis, alcoholism, paresis, cerebral syphilis and finally to the grosser defects of physical development. 10)

In the neurosis the use of the "epileptic reaction" may be to get rid, by bodily means, of quantities of excitations which it cannot deal with mentally. In this respect Freud states, "Thus the epileptic seizure becomes a symptom of hysteria and is adapted and modified by it just as it is by the normal sexual process of discharge. It is therefore quite right to distinguish between an organic and an 'affective' epilepsy. The practical significance of this is that a person who suffers from the first kind has a disease of

the brain, while a person who suffers from the second kind has a neuroses. In the first case his mental life is subjected to an alien disturbance from without, in the second case the disturbance is an expression of his mental life itself". 11)

From the above description it can be seen that epilepsy is not an entity, that the term includes a great multitude of widely different causative factors. The problem of diagnosis is therefore one of differentiating the particular one of these several possibilities in an individual case. It is also of special importance that one differentiate the organic from the 'affective' type.

If Van Gogh's epilepsy were conditioned by any other than psychological factors, that is, if it were of the organic type, there would be little of interest in his symptoms for psychoanalytic investigation. It is extremely probable, however, that Van Gogh's epilepsy was of the 'affective' type. This cannot, strictly speaking, be proved. Van Gogh's own description of his attacks, although numerous and in detail, do not teach us enough. With one exception, the events preceding a seizure are insufficiently recorded.

This exception, is his first epileptic seizure which occurred a short time after he cut off a portion of his ear. This event took place during a visit of the French painter Gauguin with Van Gogh in Arles, the little town in Southern France where the latter had set up a studio.

It is this act of self-mutilation that can be used as a starting point for our study. A few days previously, while on a trip, the two painters had engaged in fierce arguments about art and artists. According to Van Gogh's own description, their "arguments were terrible electric and both painters came out of them with their heads as exhausted as an electric battery after it is discharged". 12) That night while in a cafe they continued their heated discussions. In a moment of high excitement Van Gogh threw his glass of absinthe at Gauguin and attempted to attack him. The next morning he vaguely remembered what had

happened and apologized. That evening, however, he followed Gauguin with a razor intent on attacking him. The latter's stern and fixed expression unnerved him and caused him to turn and go back home. There he proceeded to cut off his ear lobe. This he carefully wrapped in paper and at 3 A. M. took it to a neighboring brothel where he presented it to one of the prostitutes. He then returned to his house, closed the shutters, lit the lamp, went to bed and fell asleep. 13)

From our psychoanalytic knowledge of unconscious thinking we know what an act of self-mutilation such as this signifies. It represents an act of aggression on oneself that was originally intended for some one else. The human instinct for self-preservation is enormous. Because of this the mental energy required to kill or injure oneself wilfully is correspondingly great. This mental energy is rarely found unless while doing the act, one is at the same time injuring an object with whom one has identified oneself. The injury thus also becomes a punishment. One has wished another person injured and now by means of identification one is this person and is injured oneself. 14)

The reader may suspect who this person was with whom Van Gogh identified himself. But before coming to any conclusion let us examine the evidence itself in connection with the episode. Van Gogh had met Gauguin in Paris while living there with his brother. Gauguin, a mixture of French and Peruvian blood was older, had been working at art longer and at the same time was a more able and experienced painter than Van Gogh. He was also more practical — he had been a sailor and for 11 years a successful banker and stockbroker. Whereas Van Gogh was completely dependent on his brother Theo, an art dealer in Paris, for his support, Gauguin was independent, self-sufficient, and possessed a rapid grasp of the problems relating to the necessities of life. In addition, he was opinionated, conceited, self-confident, invariably found the right word at the right time and every one seemed to submit to his will. For



the impractical Van Gogh, the influence of such a personality seemed to be irresistible.

For many months prior to Gauguin's arrival Van Gogh had been trying to get him to leave the colony of artists with whom he lived in Northern France. He wanted him to come and live with him in Arles. It was his plan to have his brother Theo support the two of them in exchange for paintings. In an early letter he told his brother that he had been thinking about Gauguin and if he came to live with him the only expenses would be Gauguin's journey and two beds that they would have to buy in any case (to put up visiting artists). Then, as Gauguin was a sailor, they would manage to grub at home, and the two of them could live on the same money that Van Gogh spent by himself. 15)

Then when it appeared that for financial reasons Gauguin would not be able to leave, Van Gogh again wrote his brother a letter: "I am thinking about Gauguin a lot. I am sure that in one way or another, whether it is he who comes here, or I who go to him, he and I will like practically the same subjects . . . , I have no doubt that I could work at Pont Aven and on the other hand I am convinced he will fall in love with the country down here." In another letter he said, "I think it would make a tremendous difference to me if Gauguin were here, for now the days pass without my speaking a word to anyone". 16)

As negotiations between the two painters neared agreement, Van Gogh set about to furnish his little studio. In several letters to Theo he described the furnishings and went into great detail about the two beds he planned to purchase. The room he was preparing for Gauguin was to be a tiny boudoir with one of the pretty beds. The walls were to be white decorated with great yellow sunflowers — large pictures of sunflowers 12 or 14 to the bunch. Everything else was to be dainty. He assured his brother that there would be nothing hackneyed in the arrangement. Further anticipating Gauguin he explained to Theo that he expected his friend to "eat and go for walks with me in the



surroundings, pick up a nice girl now and then, see the house as it is and as we shall make it, and altogether enjoy himself". 17)

Then just before Gauguin's arrival he strained every nerve or creative power at his painting. He wrote: "I am conceited enough to want to make a certain impression on Gauguin by my paintings. I have finished as far as possible the things I had undertaken, pushed by the great desire to show him something new, and not to undergo his influence before I have shown him indisputably my own originality". 18)

The eventual coming together of the two painters was a great disillusionment for both of them. Van Gogh, as it turned out, had no less a yielding temperament than Gauguin. In later years when Gauguin recalled this period he wrote, "between two beings, he and I; he like a Vulcan and I boiling too, a kind of struggle was preparing itself". 19) Outwardly Van Gogh revered and idealized Gauguin; inwardly he was seething with resentment and hatred for the man. On the one hand he identified himself with him; wished to do and like the things he did. On the other hand, in his unconscious mind, he rebelled against Gauguin's self assurance, his conceit and even his "powerful strongly creative" ability. It is highly probable that he also envied Gauguin's prowess with the ladies. a) He had ample opportunity to observe this accomplishment of Gauguin's in the neighborhood brothel which they frequently visited together. Van Gogh's feelings of this lack of success along these lines are clearly expressed in his letter to his painter friend Emile Bernard: "You know Bernard, I think if I want to do sketches in brothels it will cost me more money than I have because I am no longer young and not sufficient of a lady's man to get them to pose for me for nothing". 20) When Bernard signified his intention of going into the military service, Van Gogh wrote, "I assure you that I for one am almost jealous of the grand opportunity you will have

by going there (to the brothels) in uniform; they'll go crazy (over you) the good little women". 21)

It is apparent that Van Gogh's attitude towards his friend was highly ambivalent. He was prepared to cater to Gauguin's needs, arrange a home for him and even go so far as to undergo Gauguin's artistic influence. He accepted all of this while at the same time he made a prodigious effort to convince Gauguin of his indisputable originality. We know the origin of this sort of ambivalent attitude in man. It stems from the usual relation of a son to his father. In addition to a measure of tenderness which is habitually present for the father, there is an abundance of aggression which seeks to get rid of the father as a rival. These two attitudes of mind combine to produce an identification with the father. The boy wants to be in the father's place because he admires him and wants to be like him, and also because he wants to put him out of the way in order to gain sole possession of his mother. This whole development now comes up against a powerful obstacle. At some time in his infancy the child comes to believe that any attempt on his part to do away with his father as a rival in the family would result in an especially severe kind of punishment. He believes that this punishment would be no less than the loss of his organ of procreation — by castration. So, from fear of this injury, that is in the interest of retaining his masculinity, he gives up his wish to possess his mother and get rid of his father. 22) Under normal circumstances he reaches outside of the family circle for a love-object.

In Van Gogh's case, there is copious evidence of his undisguised identification with his father who was a pastor. Early in life, after an unsuccessful attempt to become an art dealer, Van Gogh had decided to preach the gospel. He wanted to proclaim God to mankind and to work precisely at the same occupations as his father. At this time he wrote, "If I may become a clergyman and fill that position so that my work resembles that of our father then I shall thank

God". 23) While working for an art dealer in Paris, he had experienced the throes of a religious crisis. As soon as his day's work was done he shut himself up in a room with a friend and devoted all his spare time to reading and studying the bible. He composed sermons, went to church as many as six times each Sunday, and talked as if he were living in the same room with Christ. At this time he spoke of Christ as though he carried on private discussions with him concerning questionable points in the Gospels.

We are now in a position to attempt an interpretation of Van Gogh's act of self-mutilation. Because of Gauguin's age, independent nature, 'powerful creative ability', self-confidence and success with the ladies, it appears that Van Gogh identified him with his own father. The concentration of all these enviable traits in Gauguin were sufficient to set off the powder-keg of aggression long stored in Van Gogh's unconscious mind. The impulse to do away with this father symbol was even strong enough to break through in the form of an actual attempt of aggression — threatening Gauguin with a razor. Failing this attempt he finally gratified his extraordinary resentment and hate for his father by deflecting the hatred on to his own person. In so doing Van Gogh committed, in phantasy, an act of violence on his father with whom he identified himself and at the same time he punished himself for committing the act.

That portion of his body which Van Gogh amputated is highly significant. There are references in anthropology and psychoanalytic literature indicating that the ear lobe is one of the many parts of the body that is used to symbolize the actual sexual organ. Van Gogh even treated his severed ear lobe as a phallus. He carried it to a brothel and left it with a prostitute. Translating this symbolic act we can say: in doing away with the father who stood in the position of a rival to his mother, Van Gogh was compelled to undergo the severest possible punishment, comparable almost to death itself, the loss of his masculinity — castration. But in depositing his symbolic organ at the brothel he also ful-

filled his wish to have his mother. A most common appellation for the madame or manageress of a brothel is 'mother'. One of my analyzands described how he could never walk through the 'tenderloin' district of his city without speculating whether each woman he passed was or was not a prostitute. In his unconscious mind there was the wish that every woman he passed were a prostitute. If all women were prostitutes, his mother would be included and thus she would become available to him. In this respect it is highly significant that the only woman Van Gogh ever lived with was a prostitute. And of her he once wrote; " . . . . . something simple, really motherly shows itself". 24)

Another factor to consider in Van Gogh's emotional life is the manifestations of an apparently strong bisexual predisposition which reformed his neurosis. This predisposition is clearly indicated in his ideas about communal art, in his relationship to his father, to Gauguin and above all to his brother Theo. In one of his letters to his friend Bernard he wrote, "I am sure if we were to do a picture of a brothel together, that we would use my sketch of the Zouave for one of the figures. What a pity there aren't several painters inclined to collaborate and do great things". 25) The idea of artists working together continually recurred to him. "On principle, and theory", he stated, "I am for an association of artists who guarantee each other's work and living . . . . . let us guarantee a living among ourselves, live like a family, like brothers and friends . . . . . even in case it should not succeed." 26) "People matter more than things, and the more trouble you take over pictures the more pictures in themselves leave me cold. The reason why I try to make them is so as to be among artists." 27) "As for me it worries me to spend so much money on myself alone, but to remedy it the only thing is for me to find a woman with money, or some fellows who will join me to paint. I don't see the woman, but I do see the fellows." 28)

After Van Gogh started furnishing his studio in Arles,

he informed his brother that if anyone came to visit him, there would be a "bed ready in a minute. I want to arrange the house from the start not for myself only, but so as to be able to put someone up . . . . . For a visitor there will be the prettier room upstairs, which I shall try to make as much as possible like the boudoir of a really artistic woman." 29) Even after the ear cutting episode Van Gogh made several attempt to induce Gauguin to return to Arles. "It seems to me a pity" he wrote to Theo, "that he (Gauguin) did not stay on here a bit longer. Together we should have worked better than myself alone this last year. And now we should have a little house of our own to live and work in, and could even put up others." 30) Collaborations and associations of men such as these described by Van Gogh are clear indications of strong latent, unconscious homosexuality. Normal heterosexual urges do not unite men, it separates them. 31)

In addition to the normal feelings of admiration for his father based on a son's identification with him, Van Gogh also expressed feelings towards him that appeared to stem from his latent homosexuality. His letters to his brother contain many passages such as the following, "Men like our Father are more beautiful than the sea". 32) "The end of our pilgrimage is the entering in our Father's house, where there are many mansions . . . . . The journey of our life goes from the loving breast of our Mother on earth to the arms of our Father in heaven." 33) " . . . . . when I had seen Father off at the station, and had looked after the train . . . . . though I know that we shall see each other again pretty soon, I cried like a child." 34) Quoting a Psalm tune from the past for Theo, he wrote,

"And I seem to hear in the stillness of the night  
His voice so tender and so soft."

Westermann Holstijn comments on Van Gogh's identification of his father with God and refers to the many passages

in which Van Gogh apparently has used God as a symbol for his father. 35)

But above all other personal relationships, Van Gogh's conduct with his brother Theo was the most clearly indicative of his unconscious homosexual tendencies. He allowed his brother, who was 4 years his junior, to become his sole source of financial support during his entire career as a painter. This lasted more than 10 years. He also moved to Paris in order to live with him. In his many letters to Theo written over a period of almost 20 years there are countless passages such as the following: ". . . . . brother, I am so very glad you will come, shall we then really go together through the meadows with nothing around us but that quiet, tender, soft green, and the light sky above?" 36) "How I should like to have you here. We must manage that some day. How I should love to show you my room." 37) "When I go to Amsterdam, I intend to stay some time at the Hague, but do not tell this to anybody as I do it especially to be with you." 38) On one occasion Van Gogh even tried to get his brother Theo to turn artist and come live with him. At this time he wrote: "So, lad, do come and paint with me on the heath, in the potato field. Come and walk with me behind the plough and the shepherd — come sit with me by the fire — let the storm that blows across the heath blow through you". 39) Whenever he had uncomfortable feelings regarding his attachment to his brother, he used the mechanism of projection, so characteristic of many mentally disturbed states, to relieve his conscience. In a letter to his mother, he wrote, "And after Father was no more and I came to Theo in Paris, then he got so attached to me that I understood how much he had loved Father. And now I am saying this to you and not to him, it is good that I did not stay in Paris, for we, he and I, would have interested ourselves too much in each other." 40)

So strong was Van Gogh's attachment to his brother, that whenever the latter established an interest in a woman,

the former reacted with a definite show of resentment. This is evident in his comments apropos a woman with whom Theo was living. This woman had been operated upon and was convalescing. Although Van Gogh himself had taken a prostitute to live with him he cautioned Theo against taking this woman into his home. He wrote, "Wouldn't there be somebody among your friends who would be willing to assist you and take her into his house for a time". 41) And in another letter concerning this woman he wrote, "When I read and re-read your letters about your patient it reminds me of many things. And I should like to write and ask you much more about it, but as I know the person only from your letters it is all too vague and indefinite and sometimes I have torn up a letter because of that". 42)

According to Freud, where the predisposition to bisexuality is strongly developed in a male, any threat to his masculinity causes a deflection in the direction of femininity. It induces the man to put himself in his mother's place and take over her role as object of his father's love. But in order to play the role of the woman, he imagines he must submit to castration. And it is the fear of castration which makes this solution impossible as well. "Thus both impulses, hatred of the father and being in love with the father undergo repression . . . . of the two factors which repress hatred of the father, the first, the direct fear of punishment and castration may be called the normal one; its pathogenic intensification seems to come only with the addition of the second factor, the fear of the feminine attitude. Thus a strong bisexual predisposition becomes one of the pre-conditions or reinforcements of neurosis." 43) Such a predisposition must certainly be assumed in Van Gogh and it showed itself in the important part played by male friendships in his life, in his strangely tender attitude towards Gauguin who may be thought of also as a rival in love, and above all in his attachment to his brother.

From Van Gogh's paintings, additional information can be obtained concerning his emotional life. The mechanism



of sublimation, whereby a man diverts his instinctual life into his work, is a process that psychoanalysis has enabled us to understand. In Van Gogh's canvases the trained eye can find many instances of strong instinctual feelings expressed symbolically. One of the subjects with which he frequently concerned himself was the 'sower'. He seemed to be obsessed with this subject of a man sowing seed. He even wrote that "The idea of the Sower continues to haunt me." In another letter he wrote that he had had a strenuous week of painting among the corn in the full sun and had made a sketch of a sower. He also described the color, — a ploughed field of violet, a sower in blue and white and over all a yellow sky with a blazing sun. But, he added, " . . . the project worries me beyond words in that it makes me wonder if I ought not to take it seriously and make a terrific painting of it. But I keep on wondering if I have enough force to carry it through, . . . so I am almost afraid, — and yet after Millet and L'hermitte what remains to be done is the sower on a big scale in abundant color." 44) The meaning of the sower as a symbol is not hard to find. To 'sow one's seed' is one of the most common expressions for the procreative act. Male spermatazoa are commonly referred to as seed. The ancient Greeks and many other races have commented on the strong analogy between the sowing of seed in the ground and the begetting of children. And finally the earth itself is almost universally referred to as a female — 'mother earth'. Without attempting to supply additional evidence we are safe in saying that Van Gogh's 'sower' symbolizes man in the procreative act.

But who is the blazing sun that shines down and permeates Van Gogh's canvases? In Frazier's *Golden Bough* innumerable references are to be found indicating that the sun, amongst tribes scattered over the fact of the globe, is considered a male symbol with all the procreative attributes of a father. The Incas of Peru believe that the sun is their father and that they are all children of the sun. Freud relates the case of a patient who was seized with his first

attack of anxiety and giddiness while the sun shone upon him as he worked in the garden with a spade. He had become frightened because in phantasy he believed his father had looked at him while he was working upon his mother with a sharp instrument. He supported this interpretation by saying that even during his father's life-time he had compared him with the sun. 45)

On the basis of our knowledge of symbol-formation we may interpret Van Gogh's 'sower' as symbolizing his father in the procreative act with his mother. The sun shining down and flooding the earth with its warm rays has the same symbolic content — it is a variation on a theme. But since Van Gogh identified himself with his father, the 'sower' and the 'sun' also symbolize the painter himself. In a letter from early years he had once written that he would like to be as his father — "a sower of the word" — a preacher of the gospel. It was the prompting of his masculinity that caused him to become obsessed with the subject of the sower and with the desire to paint it on a big scale. At the same time he was afraid of it, i.e., he feared castration, and wondered if he had enough force to carry it through.

Van Gogh resolved his dilemma by painting the sower and then eased his anxiety and sense of guilt by means of another picture which he called the "Reaper". This canvas shows a little reaper in a yellow wheatfield under a sizzling sun. He tried for an all-over effect of "sulphur". Regarding this reaper, he wrote, "I am struggling with a canvas, a "Reaper". The study is all yellow, terribly thickly painted, but the subject was fine and simple. For I see in this reaper a vague figure fighting like a devil in the midst of the heat to get to the end of his task. I see in this figure the image of death in the sense that humanity might be the corn he is reaping. So it is — if you like — the opposite of the "Sower" I tried to do before. But there is something sad in this death — it goes its way in broad daylight with a sun flooding everything with a light of pure gold." 46) A few days later he wrote, "There! The

'Reaper' is finished, I think it will be one of those you keep at home — it is an image of death as the great book of nature speaks of it — but what I have tried for is the 'almost smiling'. It is all yellow, except a line of violet hills, a pale fair yellow." 47) As in the ear-cutting episode where he both fulfilled his wish to possess his mother while at the same time he accepted a symbolic castration, so in his 'Sower' and 'Reaper' paintings Van Gogh appears to have gratified his masculinity and also to have accepted the supreme punishment for doing so.

Now let us return to Van Gogh's epilepsy. The attitudes of identification of a son with his father and his hatred for him, coupled with the transformation these attitudes take under the influence of the threat of punishment, are considered by Freudian analysts to be one of the keys to the neuroses in man. We can apply this key to help us unlock the secret of Van Gogh's epileptic attacks. These seizures may be thought of as a dramatization of the battle between his father and himself, using his own body as a stage. These attacks appear to be strange battles in which both parties share victory and defeat alike. In phantasy the son does away with the father and obtains gratification with the mother. Among some ancient people the orgasm was referred to as the 'little epilepsy'. At the same time that he is experiencing victory, the son is overpowered by the father in the form of conscience and suffers violent, painful seizures as punishment. b) That the meaning of the epileptic seizures is overdetermined and permits of additional possible interpretations in Van Gogh's as well as other cases, is not denied.

It appears that Van Gogh was never able to free himself of the gnawing, torturing feelings of conscience arising from his unconscious wish to do away with his father. After a year and a half of increasingly frequent attacks, he brought the struggle to an end by committing suicide. He shot himself with a revolver. While waiting for the end he asked for his pipe and smoked it. Time is not recognized

by man's unconscious mind. The fact that Van Gogh's father had been dead several years in no way altered the tension between the unconscious urges and the super-ego. In the son's unconscious mind the battle continued unabated. How it came about that the epileptic seizure device of dramatizing and resolving the struggle was given up for the suicidal method, we do not know. We can conjecture that it was a matter of mental economy.

Art did provide Van Gogh, as it provides all mankind, both artist and artlover, some measure of release from his emotional turmoils. He repeatedly stated that without art he could not live. Towards the end he wrote, "I am struggling with all my energy to master my work, thinking that if I win it will be the last lightning conductor for my illness."

48) But for some reason unknown to us he was never able to achieve the freedom he sought. His sense of guilt was of extraordinary high intensity and remained insuperable in spite of his outstanding creative ability.

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## FIRE IN THE DRAGON

Géza Róheim

The hero, after he has been swallowed by a fish or some other monster frequently associated with water, cuts the animal's heart out or eats it from the inside. In a previous publication I have regarded this as a "body destruction phantasy" (M. Klein), the hero was interpreted as the child and the dragon as the mother. 1)

There is no doubt that this is correct, but it is not a complete interpretation.

In a Winnebago myth we are told how Hare gathered some flint arrow points and then went on the top of the hill and sang:

"You can lap them in  
You of whom it is said you  
Lap me in, lap me in, lap them in!

Thus he sang. Then the thing came at him as fast as a flame shoots up."

The rest of the story is the typical swallowed hero myth. What interests us here is the flame. It is really one of the attributes of the hero, not of the swallowing monster.

In the Yuma story of Kokomat the creator god is dead and has to be cremated. The people send Cayote for *fire*. They know that he wants to *eat Kokomat's heart*, so they think they will get him out of the way and cremate the Creator in his absence. They make fire with a *fire drill*. But Cayote catches the Sun's fire on his tail and is back again on time to devour also Kokomat's *heart*. 3) Frobenius emphasizes these two traits; the swallowed hero either cuts or eats the monster's heart or destroys it by fire he has lit in the dragon's inside. 4)

In a Tsimshian myth the Elk straddles the river and kills people by swallowing them. Canoes pass through the body but the crew is retained and killed. Leesa goes down

on a raft. He starts a fire in the stomach of the elk and squeezes its heart. When he cuts off the heart the Elk dies. 5)

Golden Eye (Wren) goes into Wind's stomach with his fire-drill and starts a fire. 6)

The same episode taken from the myths of several tribes of the Northwest and the Eskimo is summarized as follows by Boas.

Before going into the Whale's stomach, Raven takes a knife and a fire making apparatus. Raven sees the *uvula* of the Whale, which looks like an old woman and the Whale rises. Food keeps pouring in. Raven cooks the food and eats it. In another version Raven and Mink are swallowed together. Raven pinches Mink so that he cries. The Whale allows him to cut off some of his flesh but warns them not to cut his heart. Immediately after this Raven cuts Whale's throat. 7)

Beside the maternal solicitude of the Whale for the travelers in his inside the comparison of the uvula of the whale with an old woman is significant.

In one version Mink obtains bait by cutting off his grandmother's vulva and is then swallowed by the Whale. 8) The hero of an Eskimo story refuses to heed the warnings of his fellows and meets the ice-covered bear. He has only one knife. Instantly he disappears down its open mouth. The bear tottered and then fell down dead. The hero cut himself out of the bear with a knife but his *hair* as well as the skin of his head came off. 9) In a Cherokee myth it was hot and damp inside of the fish, he was bald because the juices in the stomach of the fish had scalded the hair off his head. 10) The Hopi war gods are swallowed by a monster. Inside the stomach they find a new world with grass, trees and rocks. With their arrows they pierce the heart of the monster. 11)

A Koryak myth relates the tricks played by Miti (his wife) on Creator. She lay down on the ground spreading her legs upward. She thrust her head into the snow and grew so large that she obstructed his way. Creator went



right into her anus as if it were a house. While in her anus he became *bald headed*. 12)

Kamakaju in Ysabel cuts himself out of the inside of a kingfish and when he gets out he says "Where am I"? At that moment the Sun rose in the east and told Kamakaju, don't get into my way or you will be burnt. He follows the Sun up to the sky and he teaches the Sun's children to eat cooked food. 13) In the Takelma version, Coyote is the one who is swallowed by the Bear and cuts his heart off. 14) The links between Coyote and the Sun and Coyote and fire are widespread. 15)

When we come to consider it the mythologists who originally explained the story as a solar myth were not completely wrong either. 16)

The maternal or female significance of the fish, whale or dragon is quite clear. In Christian mythology the belly of the dragon or the underworld is compared to the womb of the Virgin. 17) Then why is the hero hairless? Clearly because he is a new-born infant. What comes out is an infant but what goes in is the Phallos. In a forthcoming paper on culture heroes in North America I could show that the Culture Hero — and especially Coyote, is the Phallos. Lightning fire in the inside of the fish must be coitus and these myths are parallels of the motive; hero kills his mother at birth; 18) and also emphasize the aggressive element in coitus. Ferenczi has shown that the penis is phantasied as representing the body and coitus is accompanied by phantasies of going back into the womb. 19)

The following series of episodes in the Chilcotin and Shuswap myth of Little Dog throws light upon the swallowing episode. Little Dog warned by his wife not to go in a certain direction, disobeys, and is swallowed by a moose standing in the middle of the water. Little Dog makes a fire inside, cuts the animal's heart out and eats it, thus killing the moose. He goes with his children to a house with a great stone door. Inside the house a woman is weaving a basket. The stone door shuts and opens. Little Dog places his magic

staff there to keep it open. The boys slip through and Little Dog after them. When he pulls the magic staff out his little finger is caught by the door and snapped off (Symplegades). The next scene is with a woman who has teeth in her vagina. He inserts his magic staff and breaks the teeth. Then he and all the boys have intercourse with her. 20) In the first episode coitus is represented as entering the woman *in toto* and killing her. In the second the house symbolizes the woman, the snapping door is the vagina dentata and castration anxiety is represented by the missing little finger. The last episode is self explanatory.

In Hindua mythology Kama or love is annihilated by Siva but is then reborn as the son of Krishna. When only six days old the child was carried off by a demon and thrown into the ocean. He was swallowed by a fish. The fish was caught and inside Kama (Eros) was found as a beautiful child. 21)

The hero myth of Polynesia centers around the exploits of Maui. Two of his journeys seem to be parallel to each other, namely his seeking for fire and his journey to obtain everlasting life.

Maui or Tiiti follows his father Talanga who is a friend of the fire-keeper Mafuie into the underworld. He imitates his father's voice and says:

"O rock divide  
I am Talanga  
I come to work  
On my land  
Given by Mafuie."

The rock opens and he finds his father in the underworld Talanga, whose name is probably identical with Tangaroa whom Maui kills in a parallel myth, directs him to Mafuie. The god attacks the boy but Maui broke off one of his arms and began to twist the other. He offers him a hundred wives as ransom for the arm. Finally he shows him how fire could be made by rubbing two pieces of wood

together — for this Maui spares his ancestor's arm. 22) For the Tokelau islanders Talanga, known otherwise as Maui's father, is the fire-hero who obtains it from Mafuika, an old blind woman of the underworld. 23)

The genealogy of Maui is as follows: 24)

Male-principle of	} m—f	Sacred entrance
the water of life		

Their daughters are

Smeared with filth and Offspring of the mons veneris.

Their son is called Sexual organs. The first daughter has a husband Ataraga (name not translated) and they have the following children:

Maui mua (wonder worker, the first) Maui-roto (Wonder worker between) Maui muri (wonder worker, the later) Maunitaka (wonder worker, *the drooping*) Maunitikiki-Ataraga (wonder worker, the tumid begotten of Ataraga). 25)

The song of the begetting of Maui shows clearly that the myth of the fire-bringer is a narrative of coitus even though the fire-keeper is sometimes male. Every word has an esoteric symbolic meaning.

### *Passion Song of the Maidens*

First voice:

The difficult entrance, the veiled gateway

Second voice:

Now is stormed, carried by assault

Chorus:

The intruder thrusts against the nub of desire  
Here is a maid; there below is the cleft portal  
Perhaps it is Tu-of-the-long blade who has flung her  
prone upon the ground

Extended by the finger-nails  
A net lies open; it has found a handle  
Drawn tightly, the net is drawn tightly  
O rapturous little evoker of delight  
O lusty fellow probing the slippery wound  
The fount of passion gushes forth  
The blade plies in and out  
Anon brought sharply up against the inner gate  
Elsewhere a sudden flow escapes  
The lovers are united in vigorous interplay,  
made audible in mutual embraces. 26)

Omitting other details we quote the passage that describes how Maui was procreated.

"So Hua hega (Offspring of the mons veneris) demurred no longer but reclined upon the ground; then Ataraga took hold of one of Hua hega's legs and bent it back, next he grasped the other leg and bent it back also and it came completely off, quite severed at the knee." 27)

The child is to be baptized, Mahu-ika ought to perform the ritual. But as he refuses Toga (Sexual organs) takes his place. 28) The point in this is again that the Keeper of the Fire and Sexual Organs are interchangeable. Also this was considered as a justification for his killing the keeper of fire. Maui's mother had blessed him at birth and predicted that he should *climb the threshold of his ancestress and death should have no power over man*. But his father omitted a detail of the baptismal incantation and he knew that for this the gods would punish Maui with death. 29) Because the Sun rushes too quickly on its daily course Maui's mother lacks time to cook the food properly. Maui ensnares the Sun with ropes made out of his mother's hair. "So Maui took the hair of Huahega's head and cut it off and braided it together and when this was done he took these ropes, his first rope called "First gleaming radiance of the dawn" made from the sacred strands of Huahega's hair growing upon her forehead; and "Bewitchment of the Sun"

made from the hair springing from the crown of her head and "Original lashing," twisted from the hair from the right side of her head and "Ray-entangler" twisted from the hair on the left side of her head," 30) etc.

Maui like other phallic heroes, is also the Sun. Where the Sun disappears at the horizon that is where Maui's career also ends.

"Hine nui te po Great Mother Night" you may see flashing as it were opening and shutting there, where the horizon meets the sky, what you see yonder shining so brightly red, are her eyes, and her teeth are as sharp and hard as pieces of volcanic grass, her hair is like the tangles of seaweed and her mouth is like that of a barracouda." In one version there are several Maui's. One comes to Hine who squeezes him between her thighs so hard that she died," and this was the first death in the world. In revenge the little Maui steals fire from Hine-nui-te-po and perishes in the inflammation caused by him. 31)

We strongly suspect that the locks of Maui's mother are really her pubic hair and Maui himself is the one who is entangled in it. "He went from Rarotonga by way of the sunset and he came back by way of the sunrise." 32) We have also the text of the incantation used at the purification (baptism) of the infant.

By the priests  
By Tama te-kapua (Holy father)  
By me by this disciple  
Shall this son emerge  
To the world of being  
To the world of light. 33)  
In the Tuamotu version Maui is destined to go:  
To the abyss of Te Ra tu nuku  
The Sun sailing above the earth

To the place of death — death dealt by the Sun's consuming rays streaming across the skies in the cyclonic fury of the wind."

Maui's adversary is Te Tuna the eel (phallos) whose wife he steals. Again it is essentially a phallic contest. In the end Te Tuna was roused to anger so he said: What sort of person is this Maui?

"He is certainly a very small man — they replied — and the end of his phallos is quite lop-sided." "Just let him once get a glimpse of the soiled strip of loin-cloth between my legs and he'll go flying out of the way, 34) Tuna replied.

In this completely phallic epic we still find oral or body destruction traits.

Maui notices his mother's grey hairs and he asks her: "By what means can people keep living forever."

"If you gain possession of the stomach of Rori mata-popoko (Sea-slug of the deep set eyes) you will never die."

Maui was just eating the stomach and it had almost disappeared inside, when his elder brother gave a loud shout and he vomited it up again. His wife conceived and he called his first girl Rori-i-tau (Moist phallos) and his second Te Valine hui-rori (Woman who grips the phallos) because he desired them to live forever. 35)

The reader may ask which of the two interpretations is valid, oral aggression (body destruction, M. Klein) or coitus?

If we consider the body destruction phantasies as elaborated by M. Klein 36) — and I must say that clinical data of neurotics and even more of psychotics confirms the existence of these phantasies — we must come to the conclusion that they are based on a bodily function, that of *sucking*. Is sucking not libidinal? That would be hard to deny. Therefore all these phantasies appearing in clinical analysis mainly as reactions to frustration and in the shape of aggression — must have also a libidinal core. We do not mean object love but we do mean a pleasurable sensation. On the other hand genitality contains not only libido but aggression also. There is always an element of force or rape in male sexuality. It is probable that these entities we isolate (oral

and genital on the one hand and aggression-libido on the other) are very frequently fused in reality.

Apart from this there is another consideration. Insofar as the hero of these stories is also what we call a culture-hero he is supposed to represent the means by which an anxiety situation is mastered. The myth would then represent both the original anxiety situation and the way out of that situation. The anxiety situation in this case is the *biting, eating child* in reverse form, the swallowing mother. "The gradual overcoming of sadism and anxiety is a result of the development of the libido," 37) — and that is the Phallic Hero, the Fire and Sun, the Life Instinct.

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#### FOOTNOTES

- 1) G. Róheim, *The Dragon and the Hero*, *American Imago*. I, 52.  
Cf. also J. Schnier *Dragon Lady*. *Imago* IV. No. 3.
- 2) P. Radin, *Winnebago Hero Cycles*, Indiana University Publication in *Anthropology and Linguistics*, Memoir I, 1948. 103.
- 3) Field notes.
- 4) L. Frobenius, *Zeitalter des Sonnengottes...* Berlin, Reimer, 1904, 57.  
*Der Sonnengott im Fischbauch*.
- 5) F. Boás, *Tsimshian Mythology*, Bureau of American Ethnology. XXXI. Report, 1916, 611.
- 6) Idem, *ibid.*, 659.
- 7) F. Boas, *loc. cit.*, 687.
- 8) Boas, *op. cit.*, 688.
- 9) H. Rink, *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo*. 1875. L. Blackwood and Sons. 439.
- 10) James Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, Bureau Am. Ethn. XIX, 1900. 328, 329.
- 11) H. R. Voth, *Traditions of the Hopi*, Field Columbian Museum Publ. 96, Vol. VIII, 1905, 83.
- 12) W. Jockelson, *The Koryak Jesup North Pacific Expedition*. Vol. VI. Part I, 1905. 168, 169.



- 13) R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*. 1891. 365.
- 14) E. Sapir, *Takelma Texts*. Anthr Publ Univ. of Pa. Museum. Vol. II. 1909. 81.
- 15) Cf. for instance S. A. Barrett, *Pomo Myths*, Bulletin of the public Museum of the City of Milwaukee, XV. 1933. 109, 137.
- 16) Cf. L. Frobenius, *Zeitalter des Sonnengottes*. 1904. H. Schmidt, Jona, Goettingen, 1907.
- 17) Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 178. Footnote 1).
- 18) Cf. E. Stucken, *Astralmythen*, Leipzig. E. Pfeiffer. 1907. 232.
- 19) S. Ferenczi, *Versuch einer Genital theorie*. Wien. Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag. 1919.
- 20) L. Farrand, *Traditions of the Chilcotin Indians*. Jesup North Pacific Expedition. II. 7.
- 21) W. Simpson, *The Jonah Legend*. L. Grant Reichards, 1899. 125, quotes Muir Sanscrit Texts. V. 357, 405.
- 22) W. D. Westervelt, *Legends of Ma-ui*. Honolulu, 1910. 69, 70.
- 23) Idem, *op. cit.*, 73.
- 24) I leave out the Polynesian name, giving only the English version.
- 25) I. F. Stimson, *The Legends of Maui and Tahaki*. Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bull. 127, 1934. 91.
- 26) J. F. Stimson, *op. cit.*, 5, 6.
- 27) Stimson, *loc. cit.*, 8
- 28) Stimson, *loc. cit.*, 9
- 29) G. Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*. 1855. 22.
- 30) Stimson, *loc. cit.*, 10.
- 31) E. Shortland, *Traditions and Superstitions of the New Zealanders*. 1854. 45, 46. When he sank in the waters the Sun set for the first time and darkness covered the earth. J. White, *Ancient History of the Maori* II. 76, 115
- 32) *Journal of the Polynesian Society* VIII. History and Traditions of Rarotonga, p. 69.
- 33) Takaani Tarakawa, *The Coming of the Arawa and Tainui Canoes*, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*. II. 252.
- 34) Stimson, *op. cit.*, 30.
- 35) Stimson, *op. cit.*, 47-49.
- 36) M. Klein, *The Psycho-Analysis of Children*. 1937. 184.
- 37) M. Klein, *op. cit.*, 199.

# THE UNCONSCIOUS BIRD SYMBOL IN LITERATURE

by Arthur Wormhoudt, Ph. D.

Psychoanalysis has, on the basis of clinical evidence, established the fact that the bird may in dreams be a symbol for the breast as well as the penis. A symbolic connection in the case of bird-penis is that both have the ability to contradict the force of gravity—the bird by flying, the penis by erection. The connection between bird-breast is more difficult to see, but since penis and breast are unconsciously identified the bird can be made to stand for both. It seems probable that the child first symbolizes the penis with the bird and then transfers this symbol to the unconscious breast image. At the time of the child's earliest experience with the breast it is not likely to have much experience with birds. This only comes later, as does his experience of the erectile power of the penis. The bird as breast and penis symbol is implicit in Freud's interpretation of Leonardo Da Vinci's dream of the vulture which dips its tail into his mouth in order to fulfill a fellatio wish. 1)

dove  
never  
penis

In the study of unconscious symbols as they appear in literature this ambiguous character of the bird often causes difficulty in interpretation. Poetry from the earliest times is full of bird symbols which in many instances yield very incongruous results if interpreted as referring only to the penis. On the other hand, there is a psychoanalytic theory, advanced by Dr. Edmund Bergler 2), which states that the primary motivations of the writer are derived from the breast complex on the oral level of regression. On the basis of this theory it would seem that the bird-breast symbol should be more frequent in literature than the bird-penis symbol. This paper will be devoted to some literary examples tending to show that this is the case.

These  
dove  
penis  
fig

But before we look at literature it may be of interest to note that folklore seems to provide us with evidence that

there has been a regressive transposition of the bird symbol from penis to breast. Miss Jane E. Harrison in her book *Themis* tells us that:

Zeus stole the sceptre from the woodpecker in Greece—but too effectively. The tradition of *Keleos* the old king of Eleusis lived on; but who remembers that he was the rain bird, the green woodpecker living at Woodpecker town (Keleai), the woodpecker who yaffles in our copses today? In German mythology he survives, but as miscreant not as king. The woodpecker was ordered by God to dig a well. He refused, fearing to soil his fine clothes. God cursed him for idleness. He was never again to drink from a pond and must always cry *giet giet* (giness) for rain. The many thirst stories found in folklore all point to rainbirds.

Now the fact that birds generally are thought to portend rain, plus the fact that in many primitive societies rain is thought to be the urination of the gods (the Greek idiom for rain is "Zeus makes water") suggests that here we have an intermediate link between bird as erecting phallus and bird as breast. For if the bird symbolizes the penis as urinary duct then the connection between penis and breast may be that they both produce a liquid. Miss Harrison also points out that the woodpecker was famous in Roman mythology for having saved the lives of Romulus and Remus by bringing them food. It shared this task with the wolf who suckled them. Here the character of the bird as breast is unmistakable.

Other associations between bird-breast-penis to be found in mythology are the fact that love and fertility goddesses such as Aphrodite and her predecessor Ishtar have as their totem animal the dove. Representations of these goddesses often stress the breast or symbolize it by cones or pyramids. Similarly Athena has the owl as her totem. Circe, who has the reputation of being a poisoner, is evidently a bird woman since her name means hawk, and the Sirens are also portrayed as birds. If they are breast symbols, then the fame of their fatal song probably rests on the unconscious identification

of words and milk from the breast. 3) Most interesting of all is the fact that various forms of the moon goddess were personified now as cow, now as dove thus suggesting the connection between breast as milk producer and breast as bird. 4) There are other instances in Biblical story which indicate that the bird symbol is associated with water on the one hand and food on the other. Thus it is a dove which brings Noah the information that the rains are over and floods subsiding. When the children of Israel become dissatisfied with the manna which falls from heaven with the dew, Jehovah sends a plague of quails, raised up from the direction of the sea. Moses points to the breast symbol when he says in this connection:

Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? (Numbers, 11, 12)

Another instance of where birds serve as food bringers is to be found in the story of Elijah who first prophesies famine and drought for the land of Israel and then is fed by ravens in his retreat near the brook Cherith.

But the most interesting connections between bird and breast in antiquity are those which associate winged creatures with the poets' power to produce words. This power, as we have already noted, rests on the unconscious identification of words and milk, sounds and liquid. The description of the Muses, for example, included the fact that they were winged. These mother symbols were women who dwelt on mountain tops, in themselves admirable breast symbols, and were the tutelary deities of springs from which they gave the poets the inspiring draft which resulted in poetry. Similarly Pegasus, the horse upon which the poets ride, is a feminine symbol by virtue of this fact alone, but it is also winged and said to have created the springs of the Muses by a stroke of its hoof. In the Old Testament it is a winged seraph who comes to Isaiah and lays a glowing coal upon

his lips in order to indue them with prophetic power. In the New Testament this prophetic power is symbolized by the dove. In this form it descends upon Jesus at the beginning of his ministry when he rises from his baptism in the waters of the river Jordan. Generally, of course, it inspires the writers of scripture and is the Christian equivalent of the Muse for poets from Dante to Milton.

More specific and less traditional uses of the bird symbol in poetry often gain added meaning if interpreted in the light of the unconscious identification of bird and breast. Miss Caroline Spurgeon in her book *Shakespeare's Imagery* says that birds are among the more frequently used sources of imagery in the plays. An examination of a few crucial images will show that from an unconscious point of view Shakespeare is using these images very exactly. Thus after the play scene in *Hamlet* the king is driven by his guilty conscience to attempt to confess his crime in prayer. He speaks about his "limed soul" which like a bird tries to fly upward and cannot. Hamlet enters at this point and not knowing that the king cannot confess, abandons his first impulse to kill the king because he believes the king will go to heaven if killed while praying. This seems like a flimsy excuse and does not wholly explain Hamlet's hesitation. From the unconscious point of view the identification of bird and penis if applied here would suggest that since the king's bird-soul is "limed" his penis is impotent and therefore Hamlet's impulse toward castration is useless since the king is already castrated. On a deeper level, however, the motivation may be even more complex. Recent psychoanalytic research has suggested that the aggressive tendencies of the Oedipus complex are ultimately defenses against a deeper masochistic conflict with the mother image.<sup>5</sup>) If we apply this theory, Hamlet's hesitation may be explained in a different and somewhat more plausible way. He is now saying: It is not true that I want to be masochistically refused (orally castrated) by the pre-oedipal mother who stands behind the oedipal father; on the contrary, mother's breast (and

father's penis) remains a part of their bodies and is quite incapable of being detached. This latter interpretation seems to be strengthened by the king's wish to become like a new born babe, and Hamlet's remark that he would like to kill him when he is drunk and his metaphor that the king's confession is a purge—both oral associations.

Another crucial bird image is to be found in *Macbeth* where Duncan remarks on the pleasant situation of Glamis castle and Banquo answers by saying:

This guest of summer,  
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,  
By his lov'd mansionry, that the heaven's breath  
Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze, buttress,  
Nor coigne of vantage, but this bird hath made  
His pendant bed and procreant cradle:

On the conscious level this passage ironically suggests that Duncan's confidence in Macbeth, like that of the martlets in the weather, is ill founded. Since Macbeth stands as oedipal son to the king, there is also an unconscious allusion to the bird-penis symbol which ironically minimizes the castration threat. On a deeper level the irony may refer to the bird-breast identification. For the birds build their nests on the walls of the castle, in itself a feminine symbol. Furthermore, the martlet is a swallow and the unconscious oral pun should not be overlooked. Most important of all is the fact that Lady Macbeth, who is more aggressive than her husband in the first part of the play, makes her appearance just following this speech. In the preceding scene she had said:

Come to my woman's breasts,  
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,

It is possible therefore that Macbeth's defensive aggression is ultimately directed against the mother image as represented by the castle and martlet-breast image and only indirectly against Duncan himself. If this is the case, the stress on the

fair weather character of the bird is an attempt at denial of the forthcoming storm.

In general, Shakespeare seems to identify women and birds. This is the case when he makes Arviragus speak of the supposedly dead Imogen, though disguised as a page, as a bird; or when Lear, in his frenzy, calls his daughter a detested kite. Lucrece, on being surprised by Tarquin, is said to be:

Wrapp'd and confounded in a thousand fears,  
Like to a new-killed bird she trembling lies.

The passage is interesting because Tarquin has an especial fascination for and first touches the lady's breasts which are described:

. . . like ivory globes circled with blue,  
A pair of maiden worlds unconquered,  
. . . the heart of all her land;  
Whose ranks of blue veins, as his hand did scale,  
Left their round turrets destitute and pale.

Similarly Petruchio speaks of Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew* as if she were a falcon whom he must discipline by starving her. Most interesting of all is the following curious passage from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where Demetrius is describing Helena's beauty:

That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,  
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow  
When thou hold'st up thy hand:

The peculiar turn of thought which uses the image of the crow when the color black is needed points to the unconscious identification of bird and breast. For here the hand suggests the phallic breast just as the snow covered mountain suggests the cold and denying breast proper. The crow, incidentally, is a common rain bird and thus neatly balances the frozen mountain.

Another study of the poet, *Shakespeare's Imagination* by E. A. Armstrong, describes certain associative clusters of imagery which recur frequently in the plays. One of the



most common of these is the kite (hawk)-bed-death-spirits-birds (other than kite)-food cluster. Without reference to the actual contexts in which these images appear it seems plain that we have here a group of images which express the double aspect of the bird symbol. The kite-food link refers to bird-breast, kite-bed to bird-penis; kite-death-spirits to the masochistic attachment and aggressive defense directed at breast and penis, that is, to oral and phallic castration. These translations, of course, cannot be applied to specific contexts mechanically, but if taken in the light of each play's total meaning will be seen to be significant. Another cluster seems to refer wholly to the bird-breast symbol. It consists of beetle-cliff (in relation to the sea especially)-bird (crow especially)-night-death. A third important cluster is that of drone (as the winged creature and hence bird)-weasel-sucking-king creature (particularly apes and whales, i.e. mammals)-melancholy. Here again the linkages seem to be wholly on the oral level since the drone has no power to suck honey, as his fellows have, and the weasel has the destructive power of sucking eggs. It is worth noting that Mr. Armstrong tabulated his clusters purely on the basis of contextual grouping and makes no reference to the symbolic meaning bird-penis-breast.

Another poet who has made interesting and significant use of the bird-breast symbol is Coleridge. In the second part of his poem *Christabel*, one of the characters, Bard Bracy, describes a dream in which a serpent strangles a white dove. The reader at first assumes that the serpent is the snake woman Geraldine and the dove Christabel. But this interpretation is reversed by Christabel's father who seems to think that Geraldine is the dove. This is important because in the first part of the poem Geraldine has appeared as a witch woman who inspires horror by the sight of her breast which, indeed, renders Christabel speechless—a good example of the denial of words-milk due to masochistic attachment to the pre-oedipal mother's breast. The point which is of interest to us, however, is that Geraldine, who repre-

sents the breast, is identified with the dove. In Coleridge's other great poem, *The Ancient Mariner*, the central crime for which the mariner is punished is the shooting of a bird, the albatross. There are many indications in the poem that this crime is a defensive and aggressive attack on the pre-oedipal breast. Such is the fact that the mariner is punished by thirst, that the figure of Death-in-Life who appears to initiate the weird voyage is a woman, and that the mariner is forced to do penance by a compulsive telling of his story—again the identification word-milk. 6) It is also interesting that Coleridge himself spoke of the crime of shooting the albatross in oral terms to which is added an allusion to voyeurism. He made the remark when he was told by Mrs. Barbauld that the story had not enough moral to it.

It ought to have had no more moral than the *Arabian Nights'* tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well and throwing the shells aside, and lo! a genie starts up and says he *must* kill the aforesaid merchant *because* one of the date shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genie's son.

Other Romantic poets were particularly fond of the bird symbol. Both Shelley and Wordsworth wrote famous poems to the skylark in which the bird is taken as a symbol of the poet's muse. In these poems the song of the bird is described in oral terms suggestive of the unconscious words-milk identification. Wordsworth says that the lark has a banqueting place in the sky, that it is drunken, that it is like a mountain stream. Other Romantic and Victorian poets were particularly attracted to the nightingale as a bird-breast symbol. The analysis of their use of this symbol, however, is complicated by the mythological background which the nightingale brings with it.

It should not be supposed that the bird symbol is merely traditional. A modern author, James Joyce, whose work is in some respects more unconventional than that of any other modern author, has created in the character of Stephen Daedalus a portrait of the artist as a birdlike man. He

draws on the myth of Daedalus, the artisan who fashioned the labyrinth of Crete and who made wings for himself and his ill fated son Icarus. At the time when Stephan Daedalus is making his decision to abandon the priestly career and become an artist he wanders down to the seashore where he finds his companions bathing. They greet him with cries of "Bous Stephanoumenos, Bous Stephanoumenos" and thus suggest his relation to the cow goddess and her milk producing breast which has been hinted at all through the book—*The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Stephan then sees a vision of the Muse which is described in the following remarkable passage:

A girl stood before him in midstream; alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and soft hued as ivory, were bared almost to the hips where the white fringes of her drawers were like feathering of soft white down. Her slate blue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's, soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some dark-plumaged dove. But her long fair hair was girlish; and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face.

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## NOTES

- 1) For an additional clinical example see Dr. Henry Bunker's, "A Note on Ambivalence", *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* XVII F3 '48
- 2) A summary is given in Dr. Bergler's *The Basic Neurosis*, 1949.
- 3) See the author's, "The Unconscious Identification Words-Milk", *The American Imago* Vol. 6 No. 1 Mar. '49
- 4) See Robert Graves' *The White Goddess*, p. 276.
- 5) See Edmund Bergler, *Lc.*
- 6) See the author's book *The Demon Lover*, 1949, where a fuller analysis of these poems is given. Coleridge may have been aware of the French and Portugese derivation of the word "albatross" from "alcatraz" meaning pelican or bucket bird—once more an oral association.